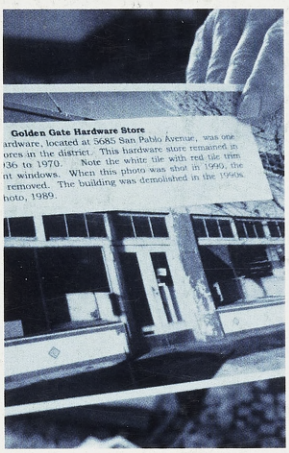
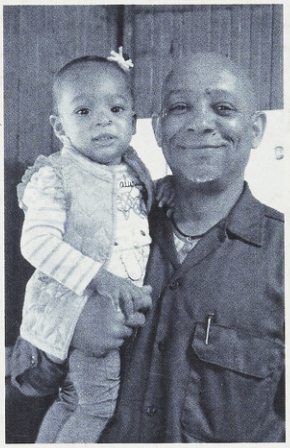
BLACKS IN OAKLAND 1852 - 1987

Donald Hausler





Bay historians

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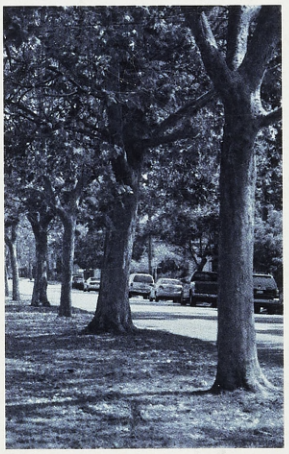

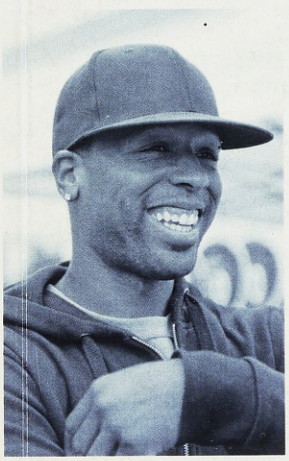

COMMONS ARCHIVE

PHOTO KEY (IMAGES LEFT TO RIGHT)

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVIST Family photo of Ruth Lasartemay (with mother), one of the founders of the East Bay Negro Historical Society 1947	**NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS** Golden Gate's business district on San Pablo Avenue, circa 1980s 2017 Courtesy Emeryville Historical Society	**FARMERS' MARKET** Phat Beets Food Justice Market & CSA during Communities' Crossing, a series of neighborhood history events 2015	**HISTORIC SITE** Charles Klinkner's real estate 'headquarters' in the town of Golden Gate 1885 Courtesy Emeryville Historical Society	**NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS** Fred Williams, second-generation owner of Williams Appliances at 6451 San Pablo Avenue 2015 Photo by Matt Dibble
NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVISTS The Lasartemays, founders of the East Bay Negro Historical Society Oakland Tribune; 1981 Courtesy African American Museum & Library at Oakland	**LONG-TIME NEIGHBOR** Joanne Dickerson-Harper, whose parents were among the first African Americans in the Golden Gate (1940s) 2015 Photo by Lorah Gross	**HISTORIC SITE** Signage from the Black Panther self-guided walking tour, 5622 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, now the All Good Bakery 2015	Commons Archive COMMONS ARCHIVE commons archive Commons Archive Commons Archive COMMONS ARCHIVE Commons Archive Commons Archive	**HISTORIC SITE** Stanford Avenue greenway, once tracks for Southern Pacific freight railroad & the East Bay Electric Lines 2015
FARMERS' MARKET Phat Beets Food Justice Market & CSA, Toveo Hill, market manager 2014 Photo by Pamela Palma	**HISTORIC SITE** The Lasartemay's East Bay Negro Historical Society Museum at 4519 Grove Street (now MLK Jr. Way) 1976 Courtesy African American Museum & Library at Oakland		**HISTORIC SITE** Oakland Public Library's Golden Gate Branch Library, a Carnegie endowed building constructed in 1918 2017	**NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVIST** Black Panther member Melvin Dickson leading a tour for the North Oakland Restorative Justice Council 2014

Photos by marksearch unless noted

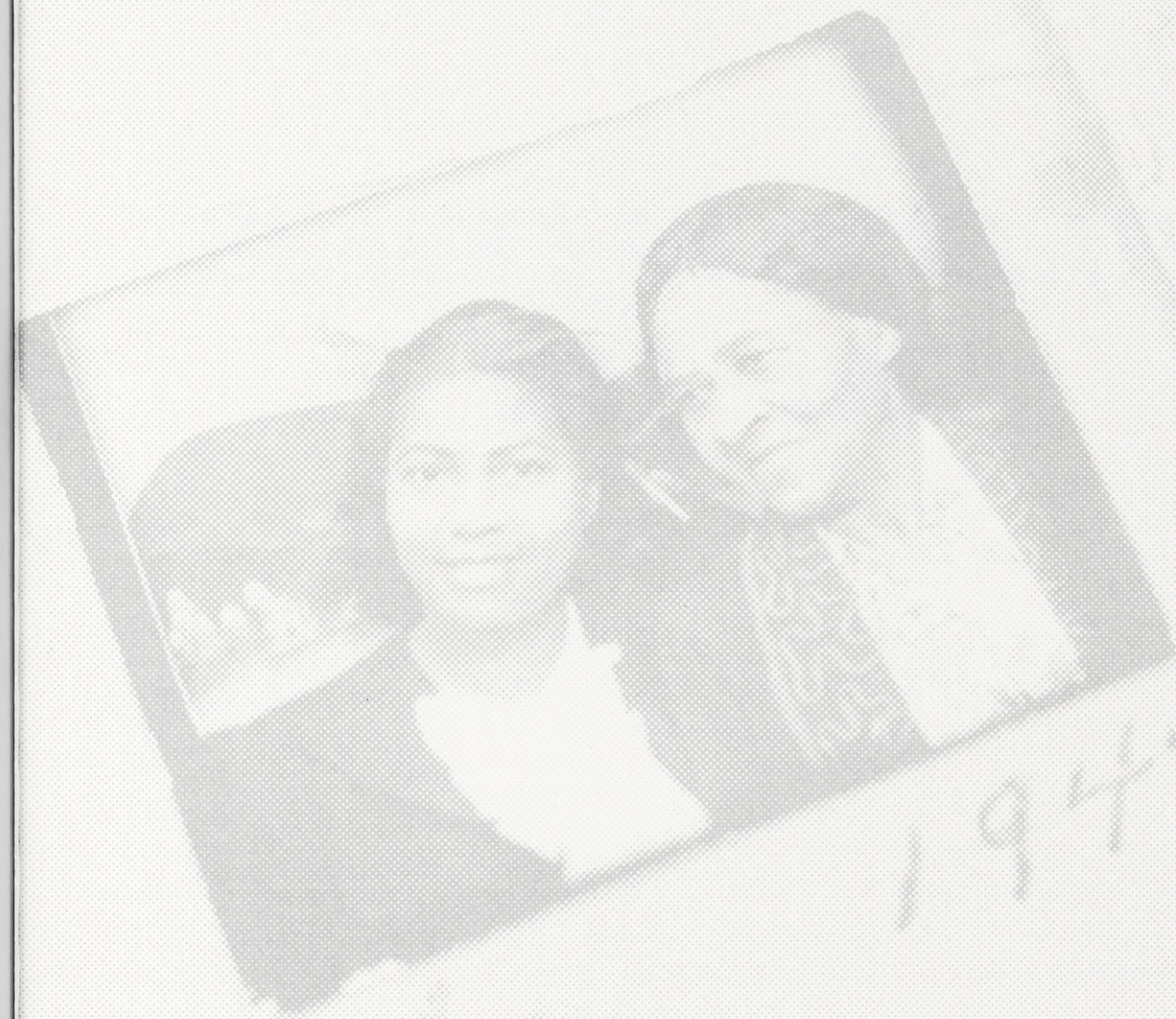

PHOTO PREVIOUS PAGE

Family photo of Ruth Lasartemay (with mother), one of the founders of the East Bay Negro Historical Society, 1947

BLACKS IN OAKLAND
1852 - 1987

Donald Hausler

1987

Northern California Center for Afro-American History & Life

Oakland Public Library
Golden Gate Branch
5606 San Pablo Avenue
Oakland, CA

COMMONS ARCHIVE

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North Oakland Senior Center

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Commons Archive

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Sue Mark gratefully acknowledges permission from Don Hausler and The African American Museum & Library at Oakland to reprint *Blacks In Oakland: 1852 - 1987.*

Commons Archive is a project initiated by cultural researcher Sue Mark in collaboration with the stakeholders in the Golden Gate Branch Library service area (North Oakland, South Berkeley, Emeryville). The views expressed by individuals or in materials developed as part of Commons Archive are representative of the project's collective conception and production and are not necessarily the views of the Oakland Public Library or any other individual involved.

INTRODUCTION

"Who are we? What is this place? Who does it belong to?"

"Sharing local history brings us closer together as things change."

–Golden Gate neighbors

Whose stories are preserved and whose are lost? This large question is at the heart of Commons Archive, a neighborhood memory bank organized by cultural researcher Sue Mark at North Oakland's Golden Gate Branch Library. Initiated in 2016 in response to profound demographic shifts impacting this community, Commons Archive includes materials, special programs and installations throughout the library. The archive's unconventional format highlights recollections that, if undocumented, will disappear.

Commons Archive honors neighbors' multiple roles as participants, narrators and creators of the many histories of this dynamically changing area. This neighborhood's lifecycle has moved at varying rates: over the past five years, this wedge of North Oakland, South Berkeley and Emeryville has experienced profound shifts, sparking debates among residents about local identity.

As a longstanding community anchor, the Golden Gate Branch Library bears witness to the neighborhood's changes. This branch has served hundreds of thousands of neighbors since opening its doors on December 15, 1918. From youth clubs to Diwali festivals, garden shows to film screenings, the Library strives to reflect the diversity of the neighborhood.

Commons Archive enriches this goal by holding in place the stories of those who have lived here and providing access to these stories for years to come. As neighbors continue to flow through the community, the Archive will stand to preserve these memories.

The Golden Gate Library Local Collection presents some materials that were, up until now, stored in basements, locked file cabinets and forgotten boxes. These newsletters, journals, unpublished papers, articles, scrapbooks and reports describe a neighborhood that has been and will continue to be supported by a vital network of local organizations. The Local

Collection brings together narratives of the dedicated efforts of neighbors and community-based organizations.

Commons Archive not only peels back the neighborhood's layers but also stretches towards the future. We hope that these materials will become an invaluable resource for neighbors and researchers. We invite you to add to this growing pool of information by commenting on these materials, sharing your experiences in the community and inviting your neighbor to join the process.

Sue Mark
Cultural Researcher
marksearch

Erin Sanders
Manager
Golden Gate Branch Library

2018

PREFACE *BLACKS IN OAKLAND*

Researcher and author Don Hausler--Oakland-born and raised--is one of the city's most dedicated local historians. A retired librarian, Hausler unearths the unknown history of Oakland and Emeryville. He is one of the co-founders of the Emeryville Historical Society, a small group that publishes information-rich quarterly journals and curates photo exhibits for the Oakland Public Library's Oakland History Room. Have a nagging question about this area's early history? More than likely, an Emeryville Historical Society journal will solve the mystery. Intriguing titles like *Murder at the Emeryville Race Track, Uncensored Recollections: The Reminiscences of Don Rodoni, Blood Sports at the Stock Yard Exchange Salon* and *The Origin of Women's Sports in the Bay Area*, are a fascinating read. None are digitized: you can find the complete print collection at the Oakland Public Library's History Room.

Hausler first visited the East Bay Negro Historical Society's storefront museum on 45th and Grove Streets (now Martin Luther King Jr. Way) in the 1980s, while working for the history department at Oakland's Main Library. The East Bay Negro Historical Society, founded by Eugene and Ruth Lasartemay along with several other families from their Beth Eden Baptist Church community, had been collecting artifacts since the 1940s about Oakland's African American history.

Hausler was impressed by the Lasartemay museum's collection, which included photos of African Americans in Oakland from as early as 1860. Feeling inspired, Hausler began looking for anything he could find at the library about Oakland's black history; publications were rare. *Negro Trailblazers of California*, by pioneering African American journalist Deliah Beasley, was one of his primary resources. First published in 1919, this groundbreaking volume is still in print. Hausler returned many times to the storefront museum to share his research and further explore the materials in the East Bay Negro Historical Society's vast collection. Hausler's curiosity sparked a decade-long research effort and the growth of a deep bond with Mr. Lasartemay. Hausler was later invited to join the East Bay Negro Historical Society's board where he was the only Caucasian member.

Under the direction of Dr. Lawrence Crouchett, an educator and scholar of African American history, the East Bay Negro Society transformed into the Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life. This entity commissioned Hausler to compile his extensive

research into the pages you now hold. A tenacious researcher, Hausler has scoured many primary sources, including African American newspapers, dissertations, papers, government documents and reports to develop this detailed account of the many legacies of African Americans in Oakland. Hausler's research contributed to the publication of Crouchett's *Visions Towards Tomorrow* in 1989, one of the first books documenting the East Bay's African American community.

Don Hausler has supported Commons Archive over the years by answering myriad questions and sharing his research troves; I'm indebted to his on-going generosity. I deeply appreciate the African American Museum & Library at Oakland's permission to re-print this incredible research for the Commons Archive Local Collection.

Blacks in Oakland: 1852 - 1987

by

Donald Hausler 1987

Introduction

A large number of Afro-Americans immigrated to California during the gold rush era. Free Blacks ventured West in search of gold, good jobs, and instant wealth. Black slaves were brought into the state by their masters to dig in the gold fields. By 1850 the Black population of California numbered about 1,000.

During the 1850s decade, Blacks resided in many areas of the state. Some lived in the Mother Lode region, while others settled in the urban centers of San Francisco, Sacramento, Stockton, and Marysville. A significant number of Afro-Americans also settled in Oakland.

During the 19th century, Black Oaklanders built a community of churches, schools, lodges, clubs, societies, businesses, and newspapers that contributed to the rapid development of the East Bay. Their story, due to the neglect of the past, is not well known. In order to rectify this oversight, the following history of Black Oakland has been written.

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Founding of Oakland

The city of Oakland is situated on land that was originally part of a Spanish grant. In 1820 Luis Maria Peralta received a large tract of land from the Governor of Alta California. Located east of San Francisco Bay, this tract of land, known as Rancho San Antonio, extended north from Albany Hill south to San Leandro Creek, and west from the shore of San Francisco Bay east to the crest of the Contra Costa Hills.

In 1842 Luis Peralta's four sons - Jose Domingo, Vicente, Antonio, and Ignacio - inherited Rancho San Antonio, each brother receiving an equal parcel of land. The four brothers built adobe homes, raised cattle, and lived a pastoral existence. Unfortunately, Rancho San Antonio did not long survive the arrival of the audacious Americans.

In 1850 three white Americans - Edson Adams, Horace Carpentier, and Andrew Moon - boarded a small boat in San Francisco, crossed the bay and landed on the "Contra Costa," Spanish for opposite shore. They ventured inland and surveyed a corner of Rancho San Antonio located west of Lake Merritt. The intrepid trio quickly realized that this undevelpped area would be an ideal site for a future city.

In an effort to acquire the land, the three Americans

approached Vicente Peralta, who owned the property west of Lake Merritt. At first he tried to have them evicted, but, after much importuning, Vicente finally agreed to lease 480 acres of the much coveted ground to the scheming Americans.

With this land in their possession, the Americans proceeded to subdivide the property into lots which they sold to immigrants who arrived in increasing numbers. The settlers erected tents, rude huts, and rough buildings, and the emerging community took on the appearance of a frontier community. Incorporated in 1852, the town received the name of Oakland after the many large Oak trees that grew in the vicinity.

The town of Oakland made rapid progress during the formative years of its existence. A store and hotel opened in 1851; a wharf was built in 1852, and the first schoolhouse appeared in 1853.[1] Because of an increase in population, the town of Oakland achieved the status of city in 1854.

Oakland's progress resulted in the decline of Rancho San Antonio. Settlers, adventurers, and squatters considered the old ranch to be public domain, and they slaughtered cattle, tore down fences, and chopped down orchard trees for fuel. The Peralta brothers could not stop these depredations, and Rancho San Antonio, having been dismembered by voracious

pioneers, disappeared forever.

Black pioneers

Black pioneers settled in Oakland soon after the town came into existence. John Peterson and his wife Hettie, originally from Georgia, arrived in Oakland in c1855. For several years they lived at the corner of Franklin and Seventh Streets.[2] John Peterson found work as a white-washer and later in 1862 he and his wife started a catering business, one of the first Black businesses to be established in Oakland, which they operated out of their home.[3]

The Petersons made a significant contribution to the early development of Black Oakland society. Hettie had the distinction of being one of the original founders of Oakland's first Black church, the A.M.E. Church, organized in 1858.[4] John Peterson was also active in the A.M.E. Church, and he served on the original Board of Trustees.

John Peterson became involved in civil rights activities at an early date, and in 1856 he attended the Second State Colored Convention held in Sacramento. Later in 1865 he represented Alameda County and Contra Costa Counties at the Fourth State Colored Convention. In 1872 Peterson participated in the struggle to integrate Oakland's public schools. Hettie Peterson died in 1880.[5] The date of her husband's

death is not known.

Another Black pioneer, William W. Rich, a native of New York, immigrated to Oakland in c1853 and opened a restaurant at the foot of Main Street (now Broadway) near the estuary. According to a contemporary account, when a customer ordered oyster soup, William Rich would step outside and dig up clams in the mudflats for the soup.[6] As a member of the Board of Trustees of the A.M.E. Church, Mr. Rich assisted in the building of Oakland's first Black institution.[7] He also participated in the civil rights movement of the 1850s and attended the Second Colored Convention in 1856.

Several other Afro-American pioneers moved into the Oakland area during the 1850s, and a small Black community began to emerge by the end of the decade. By 1860, according to the census, 23 Blacks lived in Oakland Township.

Brooklyn

Two towns located east of Lake Merritt, Clinton and San Antonio, merged in 1856 to form the town of Brooklyn. Several white men (Moses Chase, James Larue, and the Patten brothers, Robert, Edward, and William) were involved in the founding of this community. Afro-American pioneers also settled in the Brooklyn area during the 1850s, and by 1860, according to the census, a total of 18 Blacks lived east

of Lake Merritt.

Isaac Flood, a Black pioneer, arrived in Alameda County in 1853.[8] He built a tiny house at 666 East 15th Street and lived in Brooklyn for the rest of his life.[9] Flood possessed many skills and mastered many trades during his career and worked at a variety of jobs, including steward, laborer, whitewasher, paper hanger, and carpet layer.

In 1855 Isaac Flood married Elizabeth Thorn-Scott. The Floods contributed to the building of early Black institutions in the East Bay. In c1857 Elizabeth Flood started a private school for minority children in her home.[10] Isaac and Elizabeth Flood were among the original founders of the A.M.E. Church. Isaac Flood was also active in the civil rights movement that had its origin in the 1850s.

Elizabeth Flood died in 1867.[11] Isaac remarried and survived until 1892.[12] Elizabeth and Isaac Flood had a daughter, named Lydia. Born in 1862 in the house on 15th Street, she lived to the advanced age of 101. At the time of her death in 1963 she had the distinction of being the "oldest living native of Oakland."[13]

Prince Williams may have been the first Black pioneer to settle in Brooklyn. His name appears in the 1852 California Census, suggesting he arrived in the East Bay sometime before

that date. Soon after he moved to Brooklyn he married a woman named Cordelia and they raised a family. Prince Williams first worked as a laborer and later operated a small farm in East Oakland during the 1880s.[14]

Prince Williams served as an officer in the A.M.E. Church, and he also became active in the Oakland Literary Aid Society, an organization that cared for sick people in the Black community. Mr. Williams lived in Brooklyn until he died in c1887.

Evidence suggests that a close relationship existed between the Black communities of Oakland and Brooklyn. Children from both Oakland and Brooklyn attended Mrs. Flood's private school, and the A.M.E. Church consisted of members from both communities. In 1867 a segregated school for Black children was established in Brooklyn, and children from both school districts attended the school.

Brooklyn retained a separate identity for only about 16 years. In 1872 the town of Brooklyn was annexed by Oakland. The area east of Lake Merritt eventually became known as East Oakland.

Soon after they arrived, the East Bay Black pioneers Of Oakland and Brooklyn established a Black school and a Black church. They developed their own institutions because

white Oakland society, succumbing to the prejudice of the era, excluded Blacks and other minorities from white institutions. During the nineteenth century, Black Oaklanders established churches, schools, lodges, clubs, and societies that existed as Black counterpart organizations, functioning independently from the majority white society. By the turn of the century Black Oakland had formed a self-sustaining, separate Black subculture.

The Black San Francisco community served as a model for the development of early Black Oakland society. Black San Francisco emerged in the 1850s as a separate culture with its own churches, schools, lodges, clubs, societies, and newspapers. Since the early institutions of white San Francisco were segregated, Black San Franciscans built their own institutions, an expression of self-determination that the East Bay Black community successfully emulated.

Churches

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, abbreviated A.M.E. Church, was the first Black church to be founded in Oakland. Church historian Eleanora Amos wrote the following account of the origin of the A.M.E. Church:

> This church had a humble origin when Oakland numbered few houses and little over a thousand inhabitants. During the spring of 1858 a mission was organized in

> a small house on 5th Street (near the 'Point') by Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Flood, Mrs. John Peterson and others.15

The newly organized church, having no pastor or chapel, held the status of "mission." Meetings were conducted in the homes of members and at times itinerant pastors would preside over the services. In 1863 the A.M.E. Mission officially became a church and received the name Shiloh A.M.E. Church. The same year the Shiloh Church purchased a schoolhouse.16 This building, which was moved to Seventh and Market Streets, became the chapel. A description of this tiny 20 by 30 foot redwood structure has survived. The building had a

> twelve foot ceiling, shingled roof and clapboard sides... It stood on mud sills and was about two and one-half feet from the ground...A belfrey sheltered a small bell. A small covered porch about 4 x 5 feet stood over the front door.17

John Lane served as the first pastor of the Shiloh Church.

For several decades the Shiloh A.M.E. Church remained the only Black institution in the City and functioned as the social, cultural, and educational center of early Black Oakland. Mrs. Flood's private school, which opened c1857, operated under the auspices of the A.M.E. Church after 1863. Also the Shiloh Church sponsored picnics, concerts, political clubs, festivals, and social events during the 19th century that enhanced the cultural and intellectual life

of the Black community.[18]

The old redwood schoolhouse served as the Shiloh A.M.E. Chapel for over 20 years. In 1884, during the pastorate of Rev. J. Grigsby, the church built a large, imposing chapel at West and Fifteenth Streets.[19] Renamed First A.M.E. Church, this splendid ediface remained the chapel of the Black Methodists for the next 70 years. The First A.M.E. Church continued to dominate the religious and cultural life of Black Oakland until the last decade of the 19th century.

The A.M.E. Church remained the only Black church in Oakland for over three decades. Several Black churches came into existence during the 1890s, which brought an end to the monolithic, one-church Black community. Black Oakland entered a new era of religious diversity that continued into the 20th century.

The Beth Eden Baptist Church, the second Black church founded in Oakland, was formally organized in 1890 by Rev. George Washington Gray.[20] For two years the fledgling church, having no permanent home, met at various locations. Finally in 1893, during the pastorate of Rev. Robert A. McGuinn, the church purchased a house at 269-6th Street which was converted into a chapel.[21] The early pastors of

Beth Eden were involved in politics and became active in civil rights activities. After a brief period of instability, the Beth Eden Baptist Church entered the 20th century a powerful addition to the Black religious community.

Several other Black churches came into existence during the decade of the 1890s, including Ebenezer Baptist Church, New Hope Baptist Church, and A.M.E. Zion Church.

Education

The first public schools established in California did not admit Black children because the State School Code prohibited Blacks, Chinese, and Indians from attending white public schools. School districts had the authority to set up separate schools for minority students, but for several years the school districts of Oakland and Brooklyn refused to operate a separate school due to the small number of minority children living in the area. During this period the responsibility for educating the schoolless Black children fell upon the Black community.22

Mrs. Elizabeth Flood, a Black school teacher, became concerned about the plight of the outcast Black children, and in 1857 she started a private school in her Brooklyn home. The private school later operated under the auspices

of the Shiloh A.M.E. Church. After 1863 the Shiloh A.M.E. chapel, located at Seventh and Market Streets, served as the school house for the private school. Mrs. Flood continued to teach the school until she died in 1867. Without a teacher the school was forced to close.[23]

In 1867 the town of Brooklyn opened a school for Black students, the first Black public school in Alameda County. Located near 10th Ave. and E.11th Streets, the school occupied a building that was formerly a house. Mary J. Sanderson, the daughter of the famous Black educator Jeremiah Sanderson, taught the one room school. The Brooklyn School admitted Black children from both Oakland and Brooklyn school districts. The Brooklyn Colored School closed in 1871 due to a decline in the studentbody, having been in existence for only 4 years.[24]

In 1869 the Oakland School District opened an evening school for Black children and adults. This segregated school was located on Jefferson Street in a building rented by the Black community. A white teacher, D. Clinton Taylor, taught the one class evening school.[25] The Jefferson Street Evening School shut down after being in operation for only 6 months.

The Black children of the East Bay were again without a school. In order to resolve this problem the Brooklyn

School Board ignored the State School Code and admitted Black students within the district into the regular schools. In contrast the Oakland School Board debated the pros and cons of integration for several months. In the meantime the Black community of Oakland organized and petitioned the Oakland School District to integrate the schools. Finally in 1872 the School Board voted to admit Black students into the regular schools.[26] Oakland and Brooklyn were among the first cities in the state to abolish segregated schools.

Lodges, Clubs, and Societies

Several societies and lodges were organized in Black Oakland during the last 25 years of the 19th century. These organizations provided members with fellowship, entertainment, and welfare benefits. Since most societies and lodges presented social and cultural events in a formal manner, Black Oaklanders learned the dress and ettiquette of polite society. Thus, membership in lodges and societies helped to eliminate the rough conduct associated with the early pioneer period.

The Oakland Literary Aid Society, Oakland's first Black society, was established in 1876.[27] The Society functioned as a welfare organization and also sponsored cultural activities. Members received financial assistance

during times of sickness and death. The Society also sponsored cultural events, such as lectures, music, dancing, and literary activities.[28] The Oakland Literary Aid Society survived into the twentieth century.

Black female societies became popular in the 1880s, providing members with an active social life that included concerts, benefits, and balls. Many of these Black female societies had a program that emphasized benevolent works, such as caring for the sick and infirm or providing relief for the families of the unemployed or deceased. By alleviating the suffering of families in distress, they improved the welfare of the Black community.

The Ladies Beneficial Society, established in the 1880s, existed to aid the sick members of the Black community.[29] The Daughters of Samaria, also founded in the 1880s, had a special concern for promoting temperance.[30] The Daughters of Samaria was the female chapter of a fraternal organization known as the Independent Order of Good Samaritans. A female chapter of the Odd Fellows, called the Household of Ruth, was established in 1887.[31] The Household of Ruth, having no particular benevolent objective, sponsored literary, social, and musical events.

Black lodges became popular in Oakland during the last two decades of the 19th century. Several factors contributed

to the rise of Black fraternal organizations in the East Bay. Black lodges in San Francisco, some dating back to the 1850s, served as models for Black Oaklanders. Fraternal societies in white Oakland attracted a large membership, which encouraged the establishment of Black counterpart organizations. Lastly, the rituals, ceremonies, secret rites, and fellowship of fraternal society appealed to the Black male community.[32]

Founded in 1884, Occidental Lodge No. 2484, a chapter of the Odd Fellows, was the first Black fraternal lodge organized in Oakland.[33] Three local chapters of the Black Masons, Oriental Lodge (1890), Holland Lodge (1890), and Acacia Lodge (c1898), were established in Oakland in the 1890s.[34] Acacia Lodge still exists, the oldest surviving Black lodge in Oakland.

At least three types of clubs existed in early Black Oakland. Political clubs were formed to organize the Black vote and to debate political issues. Women's clubs often functioned as service organizations with a particular objective in mind. There were also men's private clubs whose members gathered together for no real purpose other than to drink whiskey, smoke cigars, and discuss the events of the day.

The De Molay Club, a private club for Black men, was organized in 1887. This club maintained a lavishly appointed clubroom, well stocked with fine cigars and whiskey, at Market and Seventh Streets "for the refreshment, relaxation, entertainment, amusement and comfort of gentlemen."[35] Another Black men's club, the Cicero Club, organized in 1891, seems to have had a thirsty membership.[36]

There were other clubs that had more constructive objectives. The Sedalian Club, organized in the early 1890s, functioned both as a social and literary club.[37] The Sybarites Social Club, also an 1890s club, sponsored events that featured games, dancing, and music. The Athens City Whist Club of West Oakland promoted card games and challenged other local card clubs by formal invitation.[38]

Founded in 1899, the Fanny Jackson Coppin Club, named after a famous Black educator, was probably the first Black ladies club to be established in Oakland. The club originally existed to develop the musical and literary talents of the members but later became involved in other activities, such as entertaining "strangers of note who should from time to time visit the city."[39] The Fanny Jackson Coppin Club still exists, perhaps the only Black 19th century club to survive into the present era.

Art, Music, and Entertainment

Black Oaklanders participated in simple, informal types of entertainment during the pioneer era of development. The grand picnic, an occasion where a large group of people gathered together in a rustic setting and participated in various games and sports, became a popular pastime. During the 1860s and 1870s the Shiloh A.M.E. Church and other Black organizations, some based in San Francisco, sponsored numerous Oakland picnics. East Bay parks, including Railroad Park, Humboldt Park, and Badger's Park, proved to be ideal for summertime picnic activities. Some of the more extravagant picnics provided entertainment in the form of music, dancing, literary exercises, and orations. The children would jump rope, play ball games, and play on swings.

In 1865 the Elevator, a Black San Francisco newspaper, advised readers to visit Oakland for a rustic sojourn.

> Did you ever take your wife to Oakland? If not, we advise you, if you consult her health, and pleasure, to take her there, as soon as possible. If you have no wife, take your next friend or sweetheart, or do as we did, "go it alone." There lovers can wander through the many groves; the sprightly can dance; young men can play ball, and the old ones can hunt for lizards and fall asleep under the trees, wearied with the great exertion...For a cheap, pleasant excursion, a solitary ramble or a social pic-nic, we know of no more delightful place.40

By the 1870s balls, concerts, dances, festivals, and debates had become popular types of entertainment in the Black community. Many of these activities were sponsored by the A.M.E. Church. Black singers and musicians, both local and visiting, performed in Oakland on a regular basis. Black theater groups from San Francisco performed in Oakland in the 1870s, attracting an integrated audience. Other forms of entertainment were introduced by the Black lodges and societies that came into existence during the 1880s and 1890s.

Two prominent Black artists, Grafton Tyler Brown and Pauline Powell, lived in Oakland during the 19th century. Originally from Pennsylvania, Grafton Brown moved to California and opened his own printing company in 1867 in San Francisco. For a while he lived in Oakland and commuted to his office in San Francisco. In 1879 he moved to Victoria, British Columbia where he operated a studio and worked for the Canadian Government on a survey team. His paintings were placed on exhibit in Victoria, and they received favorable attention. Grafton Tyler Brown is now considered one of the great Black artists of the 19th century.41

Born in Oakland in 1872 Pauline Powell studied art

and music in the 1890s and achieved fame both as an artist and a pianist. In 1890 several of her paintings were exhibited at the Mechanics' Institute in San Francisco.[42] Miss Powell pursued a career as a music teacher. She performed piano recitals in Oakland and San Francisco and acquired a local reputation as a gifted pianist.[43]

Employment

Since the institutions of early Oakland operated on a segregated basis, it is not surprising that discrimination also existed in the labor force. From 1852 to 1870 job opportunities for Blacks in the East Bay were severely limited due to racial discrimination and the undeveloped nature of the economy. An analysis of the 1870 census of Oakland shows that the majority of Black males worked as laborers, waiters, and barbers.[44] The Tubbs Hotel, an elegant hostelry located a few blocks east of Lake Merritt, hired a large number of Black stewards and waiters during the 1870s.[45]

With the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, Oakland became the western terminus for the Central Pacific Railroad. Overnight Oakland developed into an important railroad center. Since the railroad hired Blacks to work as porters, redcaps, and waiters, the job

situation for Blacks improved remarkably.

Travel by railroad became more popular with the introduction of the Pullman Car. Numerous East Bay Blacks were hired as porters on the Pullman Cars to prepare sleeping quarters for tired passengers. Blacks also worked as redcaps, who handled the luggage, and as cooks and waiters on the dining cars.[46] By 1900 approximately one-half of Oakland's Black work force worked for the railroad.[47] Although wages were low, railroad employment offered many advantages, including job security, the opportunity to travel, and the opportunity to save money and, perhaps, to buy a house. Open only to Blacks, the positions of porter, redcap, and waiter should be considered segregated occupations.

The job market remained precarious for Blacks who did not work on the railroad. Jobs were often temporary or seasonal, and frequent layoffs forced many to seek work outside of the area. Blacks were often excluded from industries requiring intensive labor, such as agreculture and factories, because employees preferred to hire cheap Chinese labor. Due to discrimination practiced by white unions, many job catagories, especially in the trades, remained closed.[48] Until the late 1890s Blacks could not enter the medical or legal professions.[49] Lastly, civil service,

including the fire and police departments, rejected Black applicants until the twentieth century.

It was often necessary for the Black worker to master numerous crafts and skills in order to survive in a shifting job market.[50] A jack-of-all-trades could jump from one job to another and find work as economic conditions changed. Brooklyn pioneer Isaac Flood had a work career that reflected this kind of adaptability. Over a period of years he worked as a laborer, paper hanger, steward, whitewasher, and carpet layer.

From 1880 to 1900 the diversity of the job market increased remarkably, and the number of occupations held by the Black male worker doubled. Black men now pursued careers that required specialized training, and a few entered the medical and legal professions. Washington Oglesby obtained a law degree in the 1890s and started a law practice that catered to a white clientele.[51] Oglesby also became involved in real estate ventures and business activities. One of the East Bay's first Black physicians, Dr. William Purnell, moved to Oakland around the turn of the century.[52]

Due to restrictions based on race and sex, most Black women who lived in 19th century Oakland were discouraged from pursuing a career. The typical Black woman at this time was married and worked as a housewife and did not

seek employment outside of the home. There were many energetic and talented housewives who devoted their spare time on a voluntary basis toward the support of societies, clubs, and churches.

Many Black women who entered the job market found employment in household situations as servants, cooks, laundry women, and domestics. Toward the end of the century, as job opportunities increased, Black women also worked as hairdressers, music teachers, landladies, midwives, and nurses.

A few ambitious Black women pursued careers and received considerable recognition. Elizabeth Flood and Mary Sanderson, Oakland's first Black school teachers, are remembered for their efforts to educate Black students during the 20 year era of segregated schools. Mary Ellen Pleasant, better known as Mammy Pleasant, appears to have been the most famous Black woman to live in 19th century Oakland. Having built a financial empire in San Francisco, Mammy Pleasant moved to Oakland in 1889 and lived for a brief period on a ranch in the Fruitvale District.[53] Pauline Powell, mentioned previously, studied art and music in the 1890s and gained local recognition as an artist and musician.

There were also Black women in lowly positions who,

nevertheless, managed to influence people and events. Hired as a wet nurse, Virginia Prentiss raised Jack London, Oakland's famous author, as if he were her own son. When Jack was 15, Virginia Prentiss loaned him $300 so he could purchase a sloop and become an oyster pirate, and thus began his adventures at sea.[54] They remained close friends throughout his life.

Business

Oakland's Black business community has a long history. Several Black owned businesses were established in early Oakland soon after the city came into existence. The restaurant of William Rich, which opened c1855, has already been mentioned. There is evidence that Isaac Flood operated a plastering business in Brooklyn in the 1850s.[55] John Peterson and his wife, Hettie, opened a catering business in the early 1860s. The following ad appeared in an 1862 edition of the Pacific Appeal, a Black newspaper published in San Francisco.

> John Peterson, corner of Franklin and Seventh street, Oakland, will accommodate parties, at all hours, with Refreshments.
>
> Parties desiring to come across the Bay, by giving notice, can be furnished with all the delicacies, fruits, etc. of the season.[56]

John Peterson operated his catering business out of his

home, a practice followed by other Black businessmen who wanted to operate a small business on a shoe string basis.

There were other Black-owned businesses that were established in the 1860s. In 1867 Thomas Watson opened the Depot Restaurant, located on Broadway near 6th Street.[57] William Humphreys Scott opened a grocery store on 7th Street near Broadway in the late 1860s that stayed in business for several years.[58] In 1866 C. F. Sloan owned a barbershop and bathing house located on Broadway opposite the Railroad Depot that may have been the first Black-owned barbershop in the East Bay.[59] During the 1870s and 1880s many other Black owned barbershops came into existence, and the barbering profession became an important activity in the Black business community.

During the 1880s and 1890s the Black business community became more diversified, as Black-owned boarding houses, beauty salons, furniture stores, livery stables, notion stores, saloons, and at least one fuel supply store opened for business. Small corporations and Black-owned manufacturing concerns came into existence in the 1880s. In 1881 J. B. Wilson established a company that manufactured furniture polish. According to an ad in the Elevator newspaper, Elite Furniture Polish had "but few equals."

> This polish has no superior, and but few equals, in any part of the world, for reviving old furniture and making it look equal to new, and for polishing Pianos and other furniture, it stands without a rival.[60]

J. B. Wilson was one of the most successful Black businessmen in 19th century Oakland. Over a period of years he operated a bakery, delivery service, immigration and employment bureau, and real estate agency.

Another Black businessman, Washington J. Oglesby, rose to prominence in the 1890s. Born in Kentucky, Oglesby arrived in Oakland in the early 1890s and started a notary public business. Within a short period of time he became involved in insurance and real estate. In 1894 the San Francisco Chronicle commented on Oglesby's many business ventures.

> He is a notary public, a real estate agent, keeps a house-renting agency, sells wood and coal, hay and grain, is the agent for a laundry, keeps an employment office and does anything in which there is an honest penny.[61]

Later in the decade Oglesby earned a law degree and started a law practice that catered to a white clintele. Oglesby became involved in so many activities that it undermined his health, and he died of heart failure in 1902 at the young age of 43.[62]

Several Black women operated successful businesses

in 19th century Oakland. Miss Della Burris and Miss Lucie Johnson opened a hair-dressing shop on Twelfth Street in the 1870s. Anne Farrell owned a dress and cloak store located at 719 Fourth Street in the 1880s, which specialized in making children's clothes. Mrs. E. A. Dawson also operated a dress making business located at 569 Sixth Street. Mrs. R. V. White owned and managed a boarding home for children at 539 Seventeenth Street in 1881. Black women made a significant contribution to the development of the 19th century Black business community.

Politics

During the 19th century, Black Oaklanders, refusing to accept their status as second class citizens, fought a sustained political struggle to achieve equal rights. The Black residents of Oakland joined Black activists in other parts of the state in an effort to force the repeal of discriminatory state laws. The involvement of Black Oaklanders into this state-wide struggle for equal rights dates back to the Black Convention movement of the 1850s.

Soon after California became a state in 1850 the Legislature passed numerous laws that deprived minorities of their basic rights. As a result of this legislation Blacks, Chinese, and Indians were forbidden by law to

vote, attend public schools, testify in court, hold public office, or serve on juries.[63] In an attempt to repeal these obnoxious laws Black leaders of California held three conventions during the 1850s. Northern California counties with significant Black populations were invited to send delegates to these conventions so there would be broad representation. Black delegates from Alameda County participated in all three conventions.[64]

The First State Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of California convened in Sacramento in 1855. Rev. Fielding Smithea represented Alameda County and was appointed Vice President. W. H. Harper, who had extensive land holdings in Oakland, represented Alameda County when the Second Convention met in Sacramento in 1856. Alameda County sent three delegates, W. W. Rich, W. H. Harper, and N. B. Speights, to the 1857 State Convention held in San Francisco.[65]

In all three conventions the delegates discussed issues relating to civil rights, including the problem of segregated schools, the disfranchisement of minority citizens, and the disallowance of Black testimony in court. The delegates drafted petitions in protest against discriminatory laws, distributed them to be signed by concerned citizens,

and submitted the signed petitions to the State Legislature. The State Legislature did not respond to the demands and petitions of the three conventions, and the convention movement lapsed into a period of inactivity. Nevertheless, the convention movement should be considered a success because major issues were defined and Black leaders received invaluable training in the political process. The involvement of Black Alameda County residents in this early civil rights effort marked the beginning of Black politics in the East Bay.

Progress in civil rights occurred in 1863 when the legislature repealed the law prohibiting Black testimony in court. In 1865 the Fourth Colored Convention met in Sacramento. Oakland businessman John Peterson represented Alameda County at this civil rights conference.[66] Delegates at the Fourth Convention discussed the problems of segregated schools and the right to vote. One major goal of the 1865 Convention was soon realized. Blacks received the right to vote with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1869.

The Black Convention Movement continued into the 1870s. The State Convention of 1873 met in Sacramento. Two Oakland delegates, J. B. Handy and T. Cromwell, attended this conference.[67] Delegates discussed several important issues,

including segregated public accommodations and segregated schools.[68] Most California public schools were integrated soon afterwards, but the legislature did not abolish discrimination in public accommodations until 1897.

Black Oaklanders began to form political clubs in the 1870s, an indication of a growing political awareness. The Equal Rights League, the first major political club to be established in Oakland, was organized in 1874 by Rev. Jeremiah Sanderson, Pastor of the Shiloh A.M.E. Church, Royal Lockett, and Z. J. Purnell. The Equal Rights League organized the Black vote and backed candidates with civil rights credentials. The League also sponsored cultural activities, including concerts, debates, and literary exercises.[69]

During the 1870s decade most Black Oaklanders supported the Republican Party, the party that had freed the slaves and passed the Fifteenth Amendment, because of its presumed commitment to civil rights. The Black Republicans of Oakland formed the Colored Citizens Club and later the Colored Central Republican Club at this time.[70] However, in 1878 a Black Independent Club formed in Oakland which challenged the Republican hold on the local Black vote.[71] In particular this group of dissidents criticized white Republican

politicians who refused to appoint Blacks to civil service positions.

In 1879 the Independent Club formed an alliance with the Workingmen's Party. Denis Kearney, a white, militant labor agitator, organized the Workingmen's Party in San Francisco in 1877. Among other things Kearney demanded an end to Chinese immigration. Many Blacks supported this platform because they had to compete with Chinese in the labor market.[72] In 1879 Washburne R. Andrus, the candidate of the Workingmen's Party, was elected Mayor of Oakland. After this initial success, the Workingmen's Party and the Independent Club declined as a political force in Oakland.

Black political activists united behind the Republican Party in the 1880s and resisted an effort in Black San Francisco to support the Democrats.[73] In 1889 Black Oaklanders formed a political alliance in an effort to open civil service positions to Black applicants. Only one Black man, John Wilds, City Hall janitor, held a civil service job in 1889. Another important development occurred in 1889 when the Alameda County League was organized, an association of Black Oakland citizens who opposed the abusive treatment of Afro-Americans in the South.[74]

In 1894 W. J. Oglesby, notary public and real estate

agent, became a candidate for the office of Justice of the Peace.[75] Although he lost the election, W. J. Oglesby has the distinction of being the first Black candidate to run for office in Oakland.

A Black Republican political association called the Afro-American League was organized in San Francisco in 1891.[76] The Afro-American League eventually organized on a state-wide basis, and by 1894 an Alameda County Chapter of the League had come into existence. Oakland's first Black newspaper, the Oakland Illustrated Guide, claimed to be the "official organ" for the League in Alameda County.[77] By the end of the century the Afro-American League of Alameda County had become the most powerful Black political party in the East Bay.

1890s Decade

The 1890s decade proved to be a transitional decade for Black Oakland in terms of social and institutional development. From 1858 to 1890 Black Oakland, dominated by one church, existed as a monolithic community. From 1890 to 1900 the Black population of Oakland increased from 644 to 1,026. The expanding Black community had the capacity to support a larger number of institutions.

During the 1890s Black Oakland established several

churches (Beth Eden Baptist Church, Ebenezer Baptist, A.M.E. Zion, etc.), lodges (Oriental Lodge, Holland Lodge, Acacia Lodge), two newspapers (Oakland Illustrated Guide, Oakland Sunshine) a Black women's club (Fanny Jackson Coppin Club), and a Black retirement home (Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People). Thus, within the short span of a decade Black Oakland changed from a monolithic one-church, one-lodge community to a pluralistic, cosmopolitan society of many churches, lodges, societies, clubs, institutions, newspapers, and associations. By the turn of the century Black Oakland was in a position to challenge the supremacy of Black San Francisco society which had long dominated the Bay Area Black subculture.

In addition to these local developments, events also occurred on a national level that had an impact on the Black Oakland community. On February 15, 1898 the battle ship "Maine" blew up in Havana Harbor, Cuba and 266 Americans, including 22 Black crew members, died in the explosion. Two months later the Spanish-American war had begun. Young American men, both Black and white, responded with enthusiasm to the call for volunteers.

Soon after the war began 300 Black men congregated at the First A.M.E. Church in Oakland, and in an impressive

display of patriotism stepped forward and offered their services for the war effort.[78] How many of this large number of Black volunteers actually joined the Army is not known, but the record shows that several Black Oaklanders fought in the Spanish-American War.

Assigned to segregated units, confined to separate quarters, forced to eat in segregated dining areas, forbidden to fraternize with white soldiers, Black troops who served in the Spanish-American War were subjected to many indignities. Nevertheless, Black troops fought gallantly in the battles of El Cavey, Santiago, and San Juan Hill, and several Black soldiers received Medals of Honor for their heroism.

The Beasley column in the Oakland Tribune provides information about Black Oaklanders who fought in the Spanish-American War. One veteran, Archie Wall, died in 1931 and Beasley mentions in her column that he "had seen service in the Indian Wars, in Cuba and the Philippine Islands."[79] Another veteran, Sergeant William A. Jackson, died in 1933; Beasley states that he "served during the Spanish-American War with the 9th Battallion..."[80] There is a biographical sketch in the Negro Trail Blazers of California of Middleton W. Saddler who fought with the Twenty-fifth Infantry in

Cuba and later in the Philippines. After 25 years of service he retired in 1917, moved to Oakland and bought a home.[81]

Dr. William W. Purnell has the distinction of being the "first Negro physician to enter the U.S. Army." Dr. Purnell received a commission as "first lieutenant and later captain-surgeon" with the Forty-eighth Volunteer Infantry.[82] After his release from the Army, Dr. Purnell moved to Oakland in 1903 and started a successful practice.

For the duration of the Spanish-American War, a contingent of Black soldiers was stationed at the San Francisco Presidio. At the end of the war these troops were decommissioned and a large number moved to Oakland, significantly increasing the population of the Black community.[83] The Black veterans of the Spanish-American War who settled in the East Bay organized into chapters and held meetings for over three decades.[84]

With the close of the century the pioneer period of Black Oakland's development came to an end. The foundation of Black Oakland society, having been established in the 19th century, flourished and prospered during the first four decades of the 20th century, a history that will be covered in the next section.

Part 11: 1900 - 1940

West Oakland: 1900-1940

By 1900 West Oakland had become a working class neighborhood populated by newly arrived immigrants and a substantial number of Blacks.[1] During the early decades of the 20th century, many nationalities lived in West Oakland, including Greeks, Slavs, Italians, Portuguese, and Irish. From 1900 to 1940 West Oakland remained an integrated neighborhood, and, according to many accounts, the various races and nationalities lived in harmony.

West Oakland attracted a large Black population because the major train depots and railroad yards were located in that part of the city. By 1900 approximately one half of Oakland's Black labor force was employed by the railroad, and Black railroad employees lived in West Oakland in order to be near the railroad yards where they worked. According to an old company rule, railroad employees had to live west of Adeline Street in West Oakland so they could report for work on short notice, a policy which forced Black railroad employees to reside in the West Oakland area.

A Black business community developed in West Oakland that catered to the local Black population. According to an article in a 1902 edition of the Pacific Coast Appeal, the West Oakland Black business community resembled a "beehive of industry."

> West Oakland is beginning to resemble a bee hive of industry among the colored population. Barber shops, hotels, coal yards, grocery stores, tailor shops, restaurants, club rooms, etc. are among the numerous enterprises of that portion of the Athens city.[2]

The West Oakland Black business establishment expanded throughout the 1920s, survived the depression decade of the 1930s and the war years of the 1940s, and maintained its viability into the 1950s decade.

West Oakland emerged as the social and cultural center of Black Oakland. Most of the Black churches, institutions, lodges, unions, and recreational facilities were located in West Oakland. West Oakland also became the entertainment center of Black Oakland during the early decades of the 20th century. Black and white patrons heard big name bands at Henry Hasting's bar, the Creole Cafe, and "Slim Jenkins" Cafe.[3]

Neighborhoods and housing

Blacks found it difficult to move outside of the West Oakland community. The more prosperous white residents of the city moved into the hill area which became an exclusive district. Many of these hill area neighborhoods had protective covenants that excluded Blacks and other minorities from buying property. For example, in 1911 a real estate company promoting the Rockridge neighborhood

published a leaflet stating that

> It is probably unnecessary even to mention that no one of African or Mongolian descent will ever be allowed to own a lot in Rockridge or even rent any house that may be built there.[4]

A 1940 study of the Black neighborhoods of Oakland indicates that the distribution of the Black population had changed little since 1900.

> In 1940 the City of Oakland with a Negro population of 8,462 had the second largest concentration of Negroes in the State of California. In general, they occupied dwellings in West Oakland with other concentrations along Market Street north of San Pablo Avenue-Market Street intersection, and put towards North Oakland to the Berkeley boundary line. A Real Property Survey made in 1936 indicated that there were very few Negroes or other non-whites in the hill areas. With complete frankness it was stated that the existence of restrictive covenants was partly to blame for this situation. However, it is likely that lack of adequate funds was a powerful deterrent.[5]

Affordable housing lured many Black immigrants to West Oakland. In contrast to the cramped living conditions in San Francisco, the East Bay offered spacious homes on wide lots with garden areas. Over the years a large number of Black families moved from San Francisco to Oakland in order to buy a home and raise their children.[6]

Regarding Black home ownership in Oakland, Beasley mentions in the Negro Trail Blazers of California that "The colored population have beautiful homes and own them."[7] Statistics show that by 1910 Black Oaklanders owned 200

homes at a time when the Black population numbered 3,055. Twenty years later in 1930 the residents of Black Oakland owned 752 homes, the population having increased to 7,303. According to historian Albert Broussard, "in 1930, 35.6 percent of Oakland Blacks were homeowners."[8] These figures suggest that the percentage of Blacks owning their own homes increased significantly from 1910 to 1930. Promoted by the Black press and Black real estate agents, home ownership became an important status symbol in Black Oakland, solid evidence of middle class achievement.

There was considerable incentive for Blacks to purchase their own homes. In 1907 the Oakland Sunshine commented on the advantages of home ownership as opposed to renting.

> To live in either of the (Bay) cities, it is almost necessary for you to own your own home; rents are high and real estate agents do not care to rent to Negroes.[9]

The reluctance of real estate agents to rent to Blacks was a problem that soon disappeared. During the post-earthquake era, enterprising Blacks opened their own real estate agencies that rented property to Afro-Americans.

Although many Blacks aspired to home ownership, a study of the housing situation in West Oakland for the 1900-1910 period shows that Blacks accommodated themselves

to a variety of living arrangements. Railroad companies owned many houses in West Oakland which they rented to railroad employees, both white and Black. Black railroad workers also lived in boarding houses and dormitories. The majority of West Oakland Blacks were tenants, and they would sometimes take in boarders for added income.[10]

By the 1930s the West Oakland district began to show signs of deterioration, which discouraged the construction of new housing. In an effort to build affordable housing and to revitalize the area, the City of Oakland supported a redevelopment project, in part financed by the Federal Government, to construct three low-rent housing complexes. Campbell Village, the first to be built, opened in 1941 and consisted of 154 units. Two other housing projects, Peralta Villa and Lockwood Gardens, were built during the war years. Thus began the redevelopment process that ultimately destroyed many of the old, historic houses and buildings of 19th century West Oakland.[11]

Churches

Two important developments occurred in the religious community of Black Oakland during the early decades of the 20th century, namely a dramatic increase in the number of Black churches and the spread of Black churches to areas

outside of the West Oakland district. In 1900 only three churches - First A.M.E., Beth Eden Baptist, and A.M.E. Zion - existed in Black Oakland. By 1915 the number of Black churches and missions had increased to 10. Fifteen years later in 1930 a local newspaper reported that there were 25 Black churches in Oakland.[12] The proliferation of Black churches created a diverse and fragmented religious community that differed considerably from the monolithic one church Black community of 19th century Oakland.

New churches came into existence through a variety of ways. Dissident members of a mother church would break away and form an off-shoot church. In another situation a church would be organized when the number of members of a particular denomination increased to the point where a church could be sustained. A third method of organization occurred when a charismatic preacher would start his own church.

There were some who believed that the large number of Black churches weakened the Black community. In 1921 the Western Outlook, a local Black newspaper, expressed this opinion.

> We are too well supplied with churches in Oakland, and in supporting them other activities suffer...[13]

The number of Black churches may have seemed excessive

to a casual observer in 1921, but these churches performed a vital service when they fed and clothed the needy members of the Black community during the depression years of the 1930s.

Many of the Black churches established in the East Bay from 1900 to 1920 were located far from the West Oakland district, the birthplace of the First A.M.E. Church and the early Black churches founded in the 1890s. Oakland's Black religious community spread out geographically until every district had its own Black church. During this period, Black churches were also established in the suburbs of Berkeley and Richmond.

From 1905 to 1911 two Black churches, the North Oakland Baptist Church and the St. Augustine Episcopal Church, were founded in North Oakland. In 1919 the 85th Avenue Baptist Church (later known as the Allen Temple Baptist Church) came into existence, perhaps the first Black church to be located in East Oakland.[14] Berkeley's first Black churches were founded during the teen years. In 1916 the Colored Methodist Episcopal Mission (now known as Phillips Chapel) opened a place of worship at California and Derby Streets.[15] An offshoot branch of Beth Eden, the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church (today known as McGee Avenue Baptist) opened a chapel

at 1934 Bonita Street in Berkeley. The North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church, Richmond's first Black church, was organized in 1919 by Rev. G. C. Coleman, pastor of North Oakland Baptist Church.[16]

The North Oakland Baptist Church and the St. Augustine Episcopal Church emerged as the two most important Black churches in North Oakland. North Oakland Baptist Church, an offshoot of Beth Eden, was established in 1905 by Rev. J. H. Dennis. Originally located at 834-19th Street, the church later moved to 32nd and Linden Streets.[17] In 1913 Rev. Gordon C. Coleman became pastor of the North Oakland Baptist Church and within one year membership increased from 25 to 100, During the pastorate of Rev. Coleman, a tragic fire destroyed the Linden Street chapel in 1930. The church soon recovered from this disaster, and in 1931 a new fireproof building was erected on the same site. Extensively remodeled in 1960, this structure remains today the house of worship for the North Oakland Baptist Church.[18]

After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, a large number of Blacks moved to Oakland in an effort to find shelter and employment.[19] Many of these refugees were of the Episcopalian faith, and they needed a place to worship. On July 30, 1910 Rev. D. F. Gee, the rector of Saint

John's Episcopal Church in Oakland, organized the city's first Black Episcopalian church, St. Augustine Mission.[20]

For three years the mission held services in St. John's parish hall at 8th and Grove Streets. On August 6, 1911 the fledgling mission received its first pastor, Rev. D. R. Wallace.[21] The mission purchased a house at 27th and West Streets, which after extensive remodeling, became the St. Augustine Episcopal Church in 1913. In 1934 the St. Augustine Episcopal Church moved to 2624 West Street and remained at this address for the next 30 years. The church is presently located at 29th Street and Telegraph Avenue.

Several other Black churches came into existence during the early decades of the 20th century, including New Hope Baptist Church at 37th Street near Market and Parks Chapel A.M.E. Church at the corner of Chester and Ninth Streets. Father Divine, the New York based Black preacher and church founder, established two churches in Oakland during the late 1930s (1385-8th Street and 2522 Magnolia Street). Father Divine's churches provided needy elements of the West Oakland Black community with food and sustenance during the depression years.[22]

The venerable First A.M.E. Church, founded in 1858,

entered the 20th century as "the oldest and largest Negro congregation in the Eastbay."[23] By 1934 the First A.M.E. Church had 823 members scattered throughout the East Bay, many of them residing far from the Mother Church at West and Fifteenth Streets. A breakdown by city of the membership in 1934 shows that by this time many members lived in North Oakland and Berkeley. As in the past the First A.M.E. Church continued to emphasize "educational, recreational and social programs for the welfare of the Negro population."[24]

Founded in 1890, the Beth Eden Baptist Church, after an inauspicious beginning, flourished in the 20th century. Membership greatly increased during the long pastorate of Rev. John P. Hubbard. Appointed in 1921, Rev. Hubbard served as Pastor for 34 years. During his pastorate, the property on Filbert Street was sold and a new building purchased at Tenth and Magnolia for $12,000.[25] Beth Eden Baptist Church experienced a major disaster on January 24, 1939 when a fire seriously damaged the Tenth Street chapel. The church survived this setback, and within two months the chapel was repaired.[26]

The ministers of the early Black churches of Oakland became involved in affairs outside the sphere of religion and many were active in civil rights activities. Rev.

Gray, the founder of Beth Eden Baptist Church, joined the American Citizens' Equal Rights Association, an 1890s civil rights group. Rev. Robert A. McGuinn, Pastor of Beth Eden during the 1890s, had the reputation of being "always ready to take up his pen in defense of any attack on the colored people of the State or country."[27] Rev. G. C. Coleman of the North Oakland Baptist Church served on the Executive Board of the N.A.A.C.P. In 1929 a newspaper commented on Rev. Coleman's involvement in civic affairs:

> Dr. Coleman is a great race booster and is an advocate of ministers taking an active interest in the civic and political welfare of the race. Seldom is there a committee of Negro citizens appointed by Negroes or whites, pertaining to the welfare of our group, on which he is not called to serve.[28]

Rev. D. R. Wallace, Rector of St. Augustine Episcopal Church, was active in the N.A.A.C.P. and served as President for two years.[29]

Institutions

From 1897 to 1927, a period of 30 years, five important secular institutions were established in Black Oakland: the Old Folks Home (1897), the Fannie Wall Home (1918), the Linden Branch Y.W.C.A. (1920), the Black Y.M.C.A. (1927), and the Watts Sanitarium (1926), Oakland's first Black hospital. An old 1930 East Bay Black directory provides an explanation for why these Black institutions came into

existence.

> The race, in attempting to adapt itself to its environment, developed certain institutions. Restricted by segregation and discrimination from the full enjoyment of the existing order of things, it was compelled to erect an order of its own.[30]

Since white institutions excluded Blacks, Black Oaklanders responded to this discrimination by building their own institutions.

The institutions established by Black Oakland during the early decades of the 20th century perpetuated the pattern of separatism that had its origin in the 19th century. Black Oaklanders entered the 20th century as a separate society that existed paralled to white Oakland, both societies almost a mirror image of the other. The institutions, churches, lodges, clubs, and societies of the Black subculture had their counterparts in white society. The building of secular Black institutions in the 20th century should be seen as a continuation of the dual society that can be traced back to the beginning of Oakland's history. The Black institutions of early 20th century should also be seen as instruments of self-determination, an effort on the part of the Black power structure to control the destiny of Black society.

The institutions of Black Oakland provided basic social services in an age without welfare or government programs.

These institutions proved to be durable. The Old Folks Home, a retirement home for Black senior citizens, remained in business for over 40 years. Founded in 1918, the Fannie Wall Home originally operated as a Black orphanage and exists today as a child care center. The Linden Branch Y.W.C.A. sponsored classes, vocational training, and activities for young women, functioning as a segregated institution for almost 25 years. The Black Y.M.C.A. existed as a segregated facility from 1927 until it integrated in the 1940s. In contrast to the other Black institutions, the Watts Sanitarium, founded in 1926, was in operation for only a brief period of time.

Although the Black institutions upon occasion moved from one location to another, they were usually situated in the West Oakland-North Oakland district. The Old Folks Home proved to be the exception, since it was located in East Oakland far removed from the Black community. The Directors of the Old Folks Home tried to relocate the facility to West Oakland just before it closed, hoping that the Home would have a better chance of survival in a Black neighborhood. Thus, West Oakland became the home of many of the early 20th century Black institutions and functioned as the institutional center of Black Oakland.

Old Folks Home

In the early 1890s a group of local Black women became concerned about the plight of homeless senior citizens in the Black community. Since white retirement homes in the East Bay refused to accept minority applicants, elderly Black people without family or friends often had no place to stay. In 1892 this group of compassionate ladies formed the Old People's Home Association with the intention of building a Black retirement home.[31]

The Association collected funds and held benefits for 5 years before the project was completed. The Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People, located on a hillside at 5245 Harrison Avenue (now Underwood), opened in 1897. The two story Victorian building was situated near Mills College in a rural neighborhood known as "Beulah Heights." The original structure had 16 rooms. With the addition of an 8 room annex in 1905, the Home could accommodate 19 residents.[32]

Since a life time residency could be purchased for only $500, the Home soon filled up with occupants. Over the years many well known Blacks stayed at the Home, including Jennie Prentiss, nursemaid to Jack London, Dr. C. H. Duvalle, prominent educator, and Alvin Coffey, a wealthy ex-slave who made a fortune as a miner and

businessman.[33] The Old Folks Home became a haven for many of the old Black pioneers who settled in California during the 19th century.

The occupants of the Old Folks Home did not spend their time in idleness. The rules of the Home required all residents to perform various tasks. The women spent their time sewing and knitting, while the men were expected to do garden work and maintain the premises.[34]

The Old Folks Home did not operate on a self-sustaining basis but had to rely on the Community Chest and the support of the local Black community. Black clubs, societies, and lodges contributed money to the Home, while individuals donated small items, such as towels, linen, and pillowcases.[35]

A large number of volunteers donated their time and energy to make the Home a success. Many prominent Black citizens served on the Board of Directors and the Advisory Board, including Mrs. Elizabeth Brown, Captain William Shorey and his wife Julia, Hettie Tilghman, and Armanda Stanford. Dr. William Purnell, one of Oakland's first Black doctors, became the Home Physician and treated the tenants on a no fee basis.[36]

The Old Folks Home, unfortunately, experienced a

serious decline in the late 1930s. The income of the Home dwindled during the depression years, since people had less money to donate to charity. The Social Security Act of 1935 seems to have had a negative impact on the institution. The tenants now received a check from the government, and many decided to leave the Home, preferring a private room to institutionalized living. In order to fill the vacancies, the Home at times accepted applicants who could not pay the entrance, which resulted in a further loss of revenue.[37]

The decline in income and the departure of tenants precipitated a crisis, and the Board of Directors reached a decision to close the Home and sell the property. The Board planned to relocate the Home to West Oakland, assuming that the institution had a better chance to survive in a Black neighborhood. In June 1938 Mills College purchased the Old Folks Home. The Home closed in December, 1938, and the remaining tenants had to be evicted. Mills College razed the building in 1939.

Sporatic efforts to open another Black retirement Home in West Oakland failed, and in 1940 the Old People's Home Association liquidated, having been in existence for almost half a century. The closing of the Old Folks Home was probably inevitable. After World War 11 retirement homes in the

East Bay began to admit Black applicants and the need for a segregated retirement home disappeared.

Fannie Wall Children's Home

The Fannie Wall Children's Home, the first Black orphanage to be established in Northern California, became one of the most important Black institutions to be founded in 20th century Oakland.

In 1913 Mrs. Elizabeth Brown, a prominent club woman, organized the Northern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. Several East Bay Black clubs joined this federation, including the Imperial Art Club, Fannie Jackson Coppin Club, Mothers' Charity Club, Art and Industrial Club.[38] Soon after its inception, the Northern Federation adopted an ambitious plan to build an Oakland based Black orphanage. The need for such an institution existed because local welfare agencies and charities had no programs to care for neglected Black children.

After four years of fund raising activity, the Northern Federation club women purchased a two story Victorian building at 1215 Peralta Street in West Oakland. The institution opened in November, 1918.[39] Originally called the Northern Federation Home and Day Nursery, the institution later became known as the Fannie Wall Children's

Home in honor of Fannie Wall, the Home's first President.[40]

The orphanage admitted both boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 14. Children were placed in the Home on a regular basis by the juvenile courts, public welfare agencies, and the probation department.[41] The day care center program admitted children above the age of three. The Home accepted children of all races, but most of the residents were Black because of the institution's commitment to the Black community.

The Victorian building at 1215 Peralta Street served as the Fannie Wall Home for 10 years. The structure proved to be inadequate, and in 1928 the Northern Federation purchased a larger building at 815 Linden Street for $5,000.[42] The Linden Street facility had accommodations for 20 resident orphans and 15 day care children.

The Northern Federation operated the Fannie Wall Home for over 25 years. In 1941 the Northern Federation relinquished control over the institution and in independent corporation assumed this responsibility. The reorganization of the Home resulted in the creation of an advisory board of 25 men and women that represented the community.[43]

The Fannie Wall Home remained at the Linden Street facility for a period of 34 years. In 1962 the Oakland Redevelopment Agency purchased the property and razed the

building to make room for the Acorn Redevelopment Project.

In 1964 the Fannie Wall Home purchased a two story building at 647-55th Street in North Oakland. After extensive remodelling the new facility reopened in 1978 as a child care center. The orphanage program had to be discontinued because the Alameda Welfare Department by this time disapproved of institutionalized living for children.

There have been other changes over the years. Under a new arrangement the City of Oakland now leases the building and operates the child care center. The Board continues to control the property and still participates in program planning.[44]

Thus, the Fannie Wall Home adapted to changing conditions and still endures, having been in operation for 70 years, the only Black institution to survive into the modern era.

Linden Branch Y.W.C.A.

The Linden Branch Y.W.C.A. came into existence at a time when the Y.W.C.A. and Y.M.C.A. both encouraged the formation of separate branches for the Black population. In 1920 a small group of local Black women, including Mrs. Willie Henry, Melba Stafford, and Hettie B. Tilghman, organized the Linden Center Y.W.C.A., having received

support and approval from the central organization. Linden Center got its name from the location of the building at 828 Linden Street in West Oakland. Because of an increase in membership, the center achieved the status of "branch" in 1923. Annual membership drives proved to be successful, and by 1938 the Linden "Y" had a membership of over 600.[45]

The Linden Branch Y.W.C.A. operated as a community center, offering members religious training, recreational activities, adult education classes, counselling services, and vocational training. A full calender of cultural programs provided members with literary instruction, musical events, and art classes. The operation received income from many sources, the primary contributors being the members and the Community Chest.[46]

The Linden "Y" functioned as a job placement and welfare agency during the depression years of the 1930s. The Room Registry and Employment Committee sponsored classes in vocational training and also found suitable housing for the homeless. The vocational training program in 1931 offered classes in Cooking, Scientific Cleaning and Dining Room Service. The Linden Club of the Business and Professional Dept. provided education and training for "girls and women in the business field." The Linden "Y" also

collected old clothes which were distributed to needy men, women, and children.[47] Thus, the Linden "Y" developed into a major Black institution, providing essential services in an era of financial hardship and despair.

The Linden Branch Y.W.C.A. existed as a segregated facility for almost a quarter of a century. Finally, in 1944 the Board of Directors of the Oakland Y.W.C.A., in accordance with a change in national policy, integrated the Linden Brancy "Y". The name of the newly integrated facility was changed to West Oakland Center.[48]

A description of the old Linden Branch Y.W.C.A. has survived.

> This is a two-story frame building with four club rooms, a reception hall, office for the business and indeustrial secretary, and two rooms rented to accommodate working girls. The building is used as a meeting place for small clubs and social groups.[49]

The old Linden Branch building no longer stands. The facility was razed in the early 1960s to make room for the Acorn housing project.

Black Y.M.C.A.

Oakland's Black Y.M.C.A., organized by Rev. L. A. Brown, Pastor of First A.M.E. Church, opened on June 6, 1927.[50] W. E. Watkins, an attorney, served as the first Director. The Black Y.M.C.A. was originally located at

3431 Market Street in West Oakland.[51]

The Market Street Y.M.C.A., which was affiliated with the Central Y.M.C.A., provided the following services:

> Promotes activities planned to develop character of boys and young men (colored) as well as health and physical efficiency. Develops the intellectual, moral and spiritual values. Free employment bureau. Emergency aid and readjustment for stranded boys under 21 years.[52]

By 1927 the organization had a membership of 160, including 134 seniors and 26 boys.

The Black Y.M.C.A. had a Director, a Committee of Management, consisting of 21 men, and an Auxiliary Committee of women. The Committee of Management, originally composed of local Black church leaders, served as the Board of Directors. The Auxiliary Committee of women served as hostesses, and on special occasions prepared dinners and refreshments. They also entertained the members with musical productions and raised money to decorate the Y.M.C.A. building.[53]

The Black Y.M.C.A. promoted a competitive sports program. One of the first projects of the organization was to raise funds for the construction of a tennis court. As early as 1927 the members participated in an Annual Track Meet and an Annual Athletic contest that attracted competitors from all over the Bay Area. The Black "Y" also

organized a basketball team that competed against other teams in a basketball league.[54]

Oakland's Black Y.M.C.A. sponsored a variety of classes and activities. Members could attend classes in the Bible and wood working. A boy's orchestra, organized by C. E. Brown, performed for the public. Boys of good character were invited to attend summer camp.

Oakland's Black Y.M.C.A. functioned as a social agency during the depression years of the 1930s. Having moved to Filbert Street in West Oakland, the "Y" was equipped with a dormitory and free beds for men seeking shelter. The Black "Y" collected and distributed clothing "for the families of many suffering Negroes." The Auxiliary Committee of women prepared holiday meals in the dining hall for the unemployed. For example, in 1933 the Filbert Street "Y" fed 103 men on Thanksgiving, one fourth of whom were white. The Filbert Street "Y" also operated a job information service for the unemployed.[55]

The Black Y.M.C.A. moved several times during its existence, but it was usually located in West Oakland. The Black "Y" remained at 3431 Market Street for approximately four years, during which time it became known as the "Market Street Branch Y.M.C.A." By 1930 the Black Y.M.C.A.

had moved to 804 Filbert Street where it was called the "Filbert Street Y.M.C.A." By 1935 the Black "Y" had relocated to 805 Linden Street. The 1937 Oakland City Directory lists the Black "Y" at 836-36th Street.[56]

After the Black "Y" moved to 836-36th Street it became known as the North Oakland Branch Young Men's Christian Association. A description of the building has survived.

> This is a large frame dwelling with eight rooms. One room is used for office purposes, one known as an all-purpose room accommodating social groups, meetings, lectures, etc. Four rooms accommodate young employed men as a residence. There is no gymnasium or playground.[57]

Since the Linden Branch Y.W.C.A. integrated in 1944, it seems likely that the Black Y.M.C.A. integrated at about the same time.

Watts Hospital

The Watts Hospital, the only Black hospital to be founded in Oakland, was established by a pioneering Black physician, Dr. William Watts. Originally from Houston, Texas, Dr. Watts arrived in Oakland in 1922. In 1926 he built the Watts Hospital located at 3437 Harlan Street in North Oakland. When the hospital opened in March, 1926 Beasley mentioned the occasion in her column in the Oakland Tribune.

> Last Sunday afternoon was a history making day for the colored people of the city of Oakland, when their new modern fireproof hospital was opened to the public for inspection. It is located on Harlan street and contains 22 beds. The plans are in accordance to specifications required by the city of Oakland for such structures. It is a concrete building with every modern equipment and with hardwood floors throughout.
>
> Dr. Wm. Watts, the owner and builder, came to the state from Houston, Texas, about three and a half years ago. After spending one and a half years in travelling over the state decided that Oakland was the city of the grest (sic) possibilities.[58]

The Watts institution functioned as a hospital, sanitarium, and a training school for Black nurses. A need existed for a Black nurse's training program because local hospitals refused to train Black nurses. The modern, concrete 22 bed hospital offered "Expert diagnosis, expert surgery, expert treatment and expert nursing with good will to all."[59] Dr. Watts also had a private practice at 1191-36th Street, and he wrote a column for the Western American, a local Black newspaper, entitled "How to Keep Well."

The Watts Hospital was only open for a brief period of time. Dr. Watts returned to Texas (c1928) after receiving word that his brother, who was also an M.D., had died. Dr. William Watts remained in Texas to manage his brother's, hospital, and the Watts Hospital in Oakland, without its founder, shut down.[60] The need to maintain a segregated hospital declined when Highland Hospital integrated its

nurses' training program in 1928.

Lodges

The Black secular intitutions of early Oakland, with the exception of the Fannie Wall Home, did not survive into the modern post-World War 11 era. The Black lodge movement, which had its origin in the late 19th century, proved to be move durable.

East Bay Black lodges experienced a period of growth from 1900 to 1940. Since white lodges continued to reject Black applicants, the Black male community organized its own fraternal orders. The early 20th century East Bay Black lodge movement should be considered a Black counterpart response to white lodge activity in Oakland. Black lodge activity in San Francisco, which dates back to the 1850s, also encouraged the development of Black lodges in Oakland.

The Occidental Lodge of the Odd Fellows (founded 1884) and the Acacia Lodge of the Masons (founded c1898) continued to prosper after the turn of the century. By 1915 several other Black lodges had come into existence. A 1915 Black East Bay directory lists the following lodges: Mizpah Temple, 18 (Elks), Bournemouth Circle, No. 197, Knaresborough Circle, No. 189, Court Knaresborough, No. 8609 (Foresters) and

Golden State Temple, No. 1 (Knights of Pythias). Black East Bay railroad employees organized their own fraternal order, Planet Lodge, located at 1724-7th Street.[61]

The Black Masons remained popular, and two more lodges were organized, Adonis Lodge (1917) and Good Hope Lodge (1920).[62] The 1930 Black business directory lists a large number of lodges that did not exist in 1915, suggesting that the fraternal movement expanded in the 1920s.

The society sections of Black newspapers published in the 1920s leave one with the impression that Black Oakland social life consisted largely of lodge and club activities. The truth is that many Black men had no fraternal affiliations, preferring a life style that centered around bars and pool halls. There existed an element of "rounders" who, after a hard days work, stopped by the Turf Saloon or the Teddy Bear Cafe for a stiff drink and, perhaps, some nocturnal companionship. Others ventured to the Marion Social Club, located on 11th Street near Broadway, to dance to the music of an orchestra. Another set enjoyed a fast game of billiards or pool at one of the many billiard parlors. A more adventurous group of revelers would sometimes cross the Bay and experience the sordid night life of San Francisco.[63]

Black Women's Club Movement

The golden age of the Black women's club movement in Oakland extended from 1900 to 1940. During this 40 year period numerous Black women's clubs were organized, each one with a distinctive purpose and an inspiring motto. Some emphasized charitable works, while others stressed cultural pursuits, such as the appreciation and cultivation of art, music, and literature. Oakland's Black women's clubs also sponsored teas, dinners, luncheons, bazaars, parties, and carnivals.[64]

The rise of Black women's clubs in California can be attributed to the emergence of white women's clubs which became popular during the Progressive era. The proliferation of Black women's clubs should be seen, therefore, as a Black counterpart response to the white women's club movement. The attraction of women's clubs is easy to understand when viewed in the context of the times. Women's clubs offered middle-class married women an opportunity to become involved in the various social and civic activities associated with club life. The clubs provided an outlet for the energies and ambitions of talented women in an age when respectable ladies did not pursue a career.

The Fannie Jackson Coppin Club, Oakland's first Black women's club, was organized in 1899. The stated objective

of this club was to "develop musical and literary inclinations of its members and work for the interests and uplift of humanity."[65] Named after a famous Black educator, the Fannie Jackson Coppin Club, because of its early origin, became known as the "Mother Club of the State."

The success of the Fanny Jackson Coppin Club encouraged the formation of other East Bay Black women's clubs. The Art and Industrial Club, organized in 1906, was devoted to art, needlecraft and charity.[66] Organized in 1907, the Mother's Charity club became the most popular Black woman's club in California. The members of this club were devoted to charity, and they "fed and cared for many children and sick and needy persons in Oakland."[67]

Organized in 1912, the Imperial Art and Literary Club promoted art, literary works, and the members also dedicated themselves to charity. In 1912 the Elmhurst Progressive Club, an East Oakland neighborhood club, came into existence.[68]

In 1913 Mrs. Elizabeth Brown, a prominent Oakland club woman, organized the Northern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, an association of Northern California Black women's clubs. This organization was affiliated with the California State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, an association of Southern California Black women's clubs organized in Los Angeles in 1906.[69]

Several East Bay Black women's clubs joined the Northern Federation, including the Imperial Art and Literary Club, the Fanny Jackson Coppin Club, Mother's Charity Club, and the Art and Industrial Club. The Northern Federation incorporated in 1914 and in 1918 established the Fannie Wall Home, a home for "destitute poor minor orphans of both sexes, also destitute working girls."[70] The Fannie Wall Home still exists, a lasting monument to the efforts of the Northern California club women.

According to Delilah Beasley, Black club women became involved in the war effort on the home front during World War 1 and were especially active in the Red Cross. During the 1920s, the Northern Federation club women attempted to coordinate the activities of the member clubs. Study programs were sent to clubs on the subjects of music, religion, arts and crafts, business, citizenship, forestry, home economics, and health and hygiene.[71]

Several Oakland women, including Elizabeth Brown, Fannie Wall, Hettie B. Tilghman, and Chlora Hayes Sledge, held important positions and were prominent figures in Black club society. Elizabeth Brown served as President of the California State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs from 1915 to 1917. Hettie Tilghman served as President from 1917 to 1919 during the war years and became known as the

"War President."[72] Fannie Wall had the distinction of being the first President of the Fannie Wall Home. During the 1930s, Chlora H. Sledge held the positions of President of the Art and Industrial Club, the Fannie Wall Home, and the California Federation of Colored Women's Clubs.

The women's clubs of Black Oakland continued to proliferate during the 1920s and 1930s. The society section of the California Voice newspapers published in 1938 lists the activities of the Texas Blue Bonnet Club, Stitch and Chatter Club, Jolly Sixteen Social Club, Golden Twelve Bridge Club, Welfare Club, Hollier Club, Native Daughter's Club, and the Friday Club.

The Black club movement declined after World War II, and over a period of years many clubs became inactive or disappeared. However, a few of the early Black women's clubs still exist, including the Fannie Jackson Coppin Club, the Native Daughters of the Golden West, and the Phyllis Wheatley Club.

Employment

We have seen how the Black institutions, lodges, clubs, and societies of early 20th century Oakland constituted a separate Black subculture that existed parallel to the social organizations of white Oakland. The work force also operated

on a segregated basis, with Blacks shunted to low-paying positions while whites monopolized civil service, the skilled trades, and jobs in manufacturing. During the early decades of the 20th century, a large percentage of the Black labor force continued to work for the railroad in segregated positions.

From 1900 to 1940 Black males were locked out of many job catagories. Black workers remained underrepresented in manufacturing and the skilled trades because white unions monopolized both areas of employment.[73] Few Blacks worked in civil service jobs, since white applicants had first priority for these positions. Limited job opportunities and restrictions based on race explain why many Blacks held menial and low-paying jobs.

In 1915 an editorial appeared in the Oakland Sunshine, a local Black newspaper, which encouraged Blacks to find work outside of the traditional areas of employment.

> More Negroes should go into business and less to Uncle Sam, the Pullman Company and the railroads. Too many of our young men look for boiled shirt jobs, such as janitors, waiters, porters, elevator boys. Young men, roll up your cotton sleeves and learn some trade. We need plumbers, tinners, shoemakers, electricians, etc., and not so many shirt and collar jobs.[74]

This advice seems valid, but many of the suggested job catagories were at that time closed to Blacks.

During World War 1 many Blacks found jobs in the shipbuilding industry and later in the 1920s on the waterfront. The shipbuilding jobs of World War 1, where Blacks worked in unskilled positions, disappeared at the end of the war.[75] During the 1920s, a large number of Blacks were hired by the Luckenback Steamship Co. to work on the waterfront, but these jobs became scarce by the 1930s.[76]

Civil service positions were virtually closed to Black applicants until the 1920s. During the 19th century only one Black man, John Wilds, who worked as a custodian and night watchman at City Hall, worked for the City of Oakland. From 1900 to 1920 Blacks continued to be excluded from civil service, but due to the increasing power of the Black vote, a few Blacks were hired after 1918 as policemen and firemen.

Arthur Sanderson has the distinction of being Oakland's first Black policeman, a position he applied for several years before he received an appointment in 191 .[77] Eight years later he was still the only Black man on the police force. The local Black press pressed for the hiring of more Black policemen, but as late as 1944 only 5 Blacks were on the Oakland police force.[78]

The City of Oakland hired the first Black firemen

in the 1920s. They worked together in a segregated firehouse (Engine #11) located at 8th and Alice Streets in West Oakland. The Black firehouse later moved to 34th and Magnolia Streets (Engine #9) and continued to operate as a segregated facility until the fire department integrated in 1953.[79]

From 1900 to 1940 a large percentage of the Black male work force continued to work for the railroad as porters, cooks, waiters, and redcaps. During this period the railroad employed approximately one third of the Black male work force. In 1929 Black railroad workers earned 60 percent of the total income of the Black Oakland community. One scholar has stated, "the history of early Black Oakland is largely the history of Black railroad workers."[80]

Porters held a prestigious position in Black society. With steady work and a steady income, they could save money to buy a home or start a business. The job of porter offered clean working conditions, the opportunity to travel, and other fringe benefits. Cooks and waiters also enjoyed special privileges; for example, they could take home dining car food for family consumption.[81]

The benefits and prestige connected with railroad work should not obscure the fact that railroad employees suffered from exploitation. In 1926 a porter's average earnings,

including tips, averaged only $1,410 a year, or $600 below the estimated poverty level income. They also worked long hours, 20 hours a day and sometimes over 400 hours a month, and they were forbidden by employers to organize. Railroad workers, therefore, could not bargain collectively to improve working conditions, and known union organizers were fired or suspended.

In 1898 the Black railroad employees of Oakland formed an organization known as the Associated Railway Employees Union. This association had no power to bargain with management, but it provided benefits for sick and injured members.[82]

In 1925 A. Philip Randolph organized the Pullman Porters into a union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, (B.S.C.P.), but the Pullman Company for several years refused to accept the union as a bargaining agent. The Pullman Company finally recognized the B.S.C.P. in 1937 after a 12 year struggle. As a result of this settlement, the company increased the wages of porters by 12 percent and reduced the standard work month to 240 hours.[83]

C. L. Dellums, an ex-porter, became a prominent figure in the B.S.C.P. in Oakland. He held the position of President of the B.S.C.P. in Oakland and later was elected Vice

President of the B.S.C.P. An early advocate of civil rights, Dellums was elected President of the Northern California Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. in 1944.

The success of the B.S.C.P., the first Black union in the Bay Area, encouraged Black workers in other areas of employment to organize in an effort to improve wages and working conditions. Because of their numbers and because of the B.S.C.P., Black railroad workers exerted considerable political and economic power during this period.

Professionals

Despite the restraints of the era, a Black professional class, composed of lawyers, doctors, and dentists, emerged in the early 20th century. Black professionals contributed to the welfare of the Black community by serving on the boards of institutions and churches and serving as officers in lodges and clubs. When they entered the political arena, Black professionals, because of their status, often assumed the role of spokesmen for the East Bay Black community.

Evidence suggests that Dr. G. B. H. Rutherford was the first Black doctor to practice in the East Bay. A graduate of Howard University, Dr. Rutherford arrived in California in 1885, prospected briefly for gold, and later (c1901) settled in Oakland where he pursued his profession.[84]

Dr. William W. Purnell, another Black physician, set up practice in early 20th century. Born in Philadelphia, Purnell received his M.D. from Howard University in 1893. During the Spanish American War, he served in the Philippine Islands as a Captain-Surgeon.[85] Dr. Purnell moved to Oakland in 1902 and soon became active in the Black community. Dr. Purnall served on the executive board of the Old Folks Home and treated the residents of the Home on a no fee basis. Over a period of years he joined many lodges and associations, including the Knights of Pythias, Elks Lodge, Foresters, Masons, and the Railroad Men's Association. According to the historian Delilah Beasley, Dr. Purnell was considered the "leading Negro physician of the Bay cities" who had "a rapidly growing practice among Italians, Spanish and members of his own race."[86]

By the late 1920s several other Black physicians had set up practice in Oakland, including Dr. Charles L. Bossieux, Dr. R. G. Bondurant, Dr. O. Roy Busch, and Dr. W. L. Jones. Dr. William Watts arrived in the 1920s and founded his famous hospital. Although men dominated the medical profession in Black Oakland at this time, at least one Black female nurse practiced in the East Bay. Mrs. N. B. Stevens, a Graduate Nurse, treated patients in an office at 2302 Adeline Street.[87] By the 1920s several Black dentists

were also practicing in Oakland, including Dr. V. W. Orviss, Dr. C. R. Claiborne, Dr. Lytle, Dr. T. R. Walker, and Dr. T. H. Grantham.[88]

Louis E. Windsor operated the first Black-owned drug store in Oakland. Originally from Illinois, Louis E. Windsor graduated from Iowa State University in 1918 with the degree of Pharmaceutical Chemist. Having gained experience working at drug stores in Kansas City, Missouri and Tulsa, Oklahoma, he drifted West, arrived in Oakland in 1923 and opened the People's Pharmacy at 1612-7th Street. At the time this drug store was the only Black-owned pharmacy north of Los Angeles.[89]

Several Black attorneys also set up practice in Oakland during the 1920s. A. Lawrence Sledge, Attorney and Notary Public, had an office at 909 Broadway. Sledge seems to have been one of the first Black lawyers to do business in Oakland. Glesner Fowler, Attorney and Counselor-at-Law, had an office located in the Bacon Building. J. Maurice, Attorney-at-Law, opened an office at the corner of Wood and Seventh Street in West Oakland.[90] Attorney John D. Drake, a civil rights advocate, held the position of President of the Northern California Branch of the N.A.A.C.P.

There were also Black men who achieved recognition in

specialized fields of endeavor. Clarence Martin, Oakland's first Black aviator, thrilled the Black commuhity with his exploits in the air. William Shorey, a renowned sea captain, contributed to the economic and institutional development of Black Oakland. W. Elmer Keeton, a Professor of music, operated a music studio, organized a famour choir, and performed for audiences on the organ and piano.

Clarence Martin, a graduate of University High School, took classes in aviation at the Berkeley Aviation School. He became an air-mail pilot and by 1927 was regarded as the "Negro authority on aeronautical engineering." When the Oakland Municipal Airport opened in 1927, Martin worked as a flight instructor at the airport and held the position of Assistant Manager of Dorty Airlines. Known as the "colored Ace" by local Black newspapers, Clarence Martin piloted a large mono-plane, similar to the airplane Charles Lindberg flew across the Atlantic.[91]

Born in 1859 on the Island of Barbados, William Shorey began his seafaring career while still a young man. He studied navigation and in 1876 signed up for his first cruise on board a whaling ship. He was soon promoted to officer, and later in 1886 at the age of 27 became the "only colored captain on the Pacific Coast."[92] During his long

career at sea, Captain Shorey, the "Black Ahab," commanded many ships in his pursuit of the whale through cold Arctic seas.

In the 1890s Captain Shorey and his wife, Julia, moved to Oakland and bought a house at 1774-8th Street. While living in Oakland, Captain Shorey became involved in several business ventures, and for several years he served on the advisory board of the Old Folks Home. Julia Shorey held the position of President of the Old Folks Home for 18 years. In honor of Captain Shorey, Mayor Frank Mott renamed a street in West Oakland "Shorey Street." The Shorey house in West Oakland still stands and Shorey Street still bears his name.[93]

W. Elmer Keeton, born in 1882 in Missouri, received a Doctorate in Music at the Northwestern University School of Music in Evanston, Illinois. Professor Keeton arrived in Oakland in 1921 and opened a music studio at 1364 Ninth Street, where he taught piano and organ. He served as organist and choir director for the St. Augustine Episcopal Church, the First A.M.E. Church, and the North Oakland Baptist Church. He also played the organ for the Lincoln Theater in West Oakland, performed organ recitals over the radio, and taught the subject of music in the Prescott

Evening School. In 1935 Professor Keeton organized the renowned Negro Chorus, a project that was financed by the Works Progress Administration. Professor W. Elmer Keeton died on January 1, 1947 at his Oakland home.[94]

Black female work force

During the 1900-1940 period, many Black men worked at low paying jobs. In order to supplement the family income, their wives sometimes worked outside the home. Because job opportunities were limited, Black women in many instances could find work only as domestics in homes and hotels.[95] However, a few Black women started professional careers during this period.

Ida Jackson, Oakland's first Black public school teacher, began her teaching career at Prescott Junior High in 1926. By the early 1930s three Black women (Beth Pier, Thelman Brown, and Miss Roberta Wells) worked as evening school teachers. Miss Wells became the first Black Spanish teacher in the Oakland Public School system.[96]

Black women entered the nursing profession for the first time in the late 1920s. Highland Hospital opened in 1926, but for two years the Medical Director refused to admit Black women into the nurses training program. Finally,

Highland Hospital in 1928 accepted two Black women in the program, but they had to endure various forms of discrimination. For example, they had to study in a segregated, basement room with old furniture and no heat. Despite this discrimination, they completed the program and graduated as nurses.[97]

A few Black women went to college, received degrees, and worked on a professional level during this period. In 1929 the Oakland Independent reported that Virginia Stephens, the daughter of a successful Black restaurateur, graduated from law school at U.C. Berkeley.

> She recently graduated from the University of California. She was the first colored woman to graduate from the Law School of this University, receiving her Degree of Bachelor of Law. Miss Stephens has since been admitted to the bar to practice Law in the State of California, she is the first to receive this honor.[98]

In 1933 Murial Taylor passed the Social Service examination and received an appointment as a social worker, the first Black woman to qualify for this position in Oakland.[99]

These women proved that is was possible for Blacks to work as professionals, but only a few had the education and the opportunity to enter this world.

Business

From 1900 until the Great Depression the Black Business community of Oakland continued to expand and diversify, and

by 1929, when the Black population numbered over 7,000, over 100 Black-owned businesses were in operation. According to an article in the Oakland Independent, the Black business community in 1929 consisted of the following: 16 real estate brokers, 16 barber shops, 15 restaurants and cafes, 13 beauty parlors, 11 billiard and pool parlors, 8 dressmakers, 8 tailoring shops, 5 printers, 5 furniture stores, 4 candy shops, 3 garages, 2 jewelers, 2 undertakers, 2 art and mechanical studios, 2 insurance companies, 2 haberdasheries, 2 grocery stores, 1 pharmacy, and 1 ice cream dealer.[100]

Several Black-owned real estate agencies came into existence during the first three decades of the 20th century. Following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, a large number of white and Black refugees moved from San Francisco to the East Bay.[101] This sudden influx of people created a desperate need for housing in Oakland, which encouraged many Blacks to enter the real estate business. In 1907 George Watkins, Oscar Palmer, and William F. Jackson formed a partnership and organized the Pacific Coast Real Estate and Employment Co. at 1696-7th Street, one of the first Black-owned real estate agencies to be established in Oakland. Within a few years several other Black real estate agencies came into existence, and by 1929 the real

estate business had become the most popular Black enterprise in Black Oakland. Some of these agencies were small time or fly-by-night operations, but others did a substantial business. The Bay View Realty Co. at Eighth and West Streets, owned by W. A. Butler and W. S. Howard, and the Smith and Allen Realty Brokers at 2327 San Pablo Ave. both prospered during this era.[102]

Several Black-owned restaurants were established in Black Oakland from 1900 to 1930, and a few became renowned for their excellent service and cuisine. The West End Cafe, owned and operated by William Vance and Simon A. Dedrich, opened near the turn of the century. Located on 7th Street, this restaurant, during its heyday, served a thousand meals a day and became famous.[103] Stephen's Restaurant on 2nd Ave. and East 14th Street, operated by W. M. Stephens, also acquired an outstanding reputation. There were other lesser known Black-owned restaurants, many located on 7th Street, that opened during this period.

Two Black-owned furniture companies, Marshall Furniture Co. and Bridges Furniture Co., were established in early 20th century Oakland. The Bridges Furniture Co., owned by E. L. Bridges, sold both new and used furniture. Located at 2017 San Pablo, Bridges Furniture opened in 1905.[104]

The Marshall Furniture Co., owned by E. Marshall, was located at 428-8th Street. This business sold new and second hand furniture, stoves, ranges, carpets, and rugs.

Two Black-owned funeral homes were in operation during the 1920s. Baker and Taylor Undertaker at 1214-Eighth Street, owned by Charles and Gladys Baker, buried 85 customers in 1928. The Hudson and Butler Funeral Directors, located at 953 Eighth Street, was owned by L. M. Hudson. A graduate of Worsham School of Embalming in Chicago, L. M. Hudson opened his Oakland business in 1915, becoming the "first colored undertaker in Northern California."[105]

In 1929 a total of 11 billiard and pool parlors operated in Black Oakland, suggesting that the game of pool enjoyed considerable popularity. One prominent establishment, the Turf Recreation Hall and Billiard Room at 1736 West 7th Street, attracted a sophisticated clientele, according to an ad in the Oakland Independent.

> Here you meet the visitor from New York, the breezy Chicagoan, the Cosmopolitan from all points South, East, and West.[106]

Two Black-owned finance companies were established in Oakland in the 1920s. The Golden State and Guarantee Fund Insurance Company at 790 Eighth Street by 1928 had 1,500 policy holders in the Bay Area. Incorporated in 1925, this Los Angeles based company was the first insurance business

in California to be owned by Blacks. The Inter-City Finance Corporation of Alameda County, established in 1926, was located at 3718 San Pablo Ave. This company operated as a lending institution, providing loans for customers from the Black community.[107]

Several corporations, organized and operated by Black businessmen, were established during the 1900 to 1940 period. The following Black corporations filed Articles of Incorporation with the State of California: the Afro-America Co-operation (1901), the Enterprise Rochdale Co. (1901), Afro-America Real Estate Association and Employment Bureau of California (1908), United Hall Association (1914), Bay Cities Investment Co. (1917), Ethiopia Credit Union (1928), and the Ethiopia Co-operative Business Association (1928). These corporations engaged in various business ventures, such as buying and selling real estate, loaning money, and buying and selling merchandise. Black corporations raised capital by selling stock to Black investors. The business ventures financed by Black corporations stimulated the economy of Black Oakland.[108]

Black women also participated in the world of business. Lydia Flood Jackson, the daughter of Elizabeth Flood, Oakland's first Black school teacher, started a cosmetics business, Flood Toilet Creams, that sold products all over

the state. Flood Toilet Creams manufactured creams, perfumes, and toiletries that were purchased by both Black and white customers. Mme. B. A. Purnell manufactured human hair goods at 1377-10th Street. Mme. Purnell also sold a product called Indian Herb Hair Grower that grew hair "thick and long." Mrs. Emma Chandler operated a beauty parlor at 1012-36th Street that specialized in "shampooing and all kinds of hair work."[109]

In addition to the prominent businesses already described, there were also small time proprietors who operated out of their homes. It should be mentioned that many Black businesses operated outside of the law. Some of these illicit establishments were involved in gambling, while others sold liquor during the prohibition era.[110]

The legitimate Black business community received support from various sources. A Black business league, called the Oakland and East Bay Cities Negro Business League, was established in 1919. The purpose of the league was to promote Black business, to organize Black businessmen in the East Bay, and to cooperate with the National Negro Business League. Dr. O. Roy Busch served as President of the League for several years.[111]

Several East Bay and Bay Area Black business directories were published during this period that also promoted

the Black business community. The Bay Area's first Black business directory, the Souvenir Directory of Prominent Afro-Americans, Pacific Coast, was published in c1894 by G. E. Watkins, also the founder of the Oakland Illustrated Guide, Oakland's first Black newspaper. This directory includes a list of "prominent Black businesses located in the East Bay."112

The Tilghman Printing Co. published two business directories in the teen years that also provided information about the churches, lodges, clubs, and institutions of the East Bay Black community. Established in c1912 by Charles F. Tilghman, the Tilghman Printing Co. soon became the major printing business of Black Oakland.

The Tilghman Printing Co. published the Colored American Directory in 1915 to coincide with the opening of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. This directory included the Bay Area cities of San Francisco, Berkeley, Alameda, Richmond, Emeryville, and Piedmont at a time when the Black population of the Bay Area numbered only 5,840. It is a remarkable fact that Charles F. Tilghman was only 18 years of age when the 1915 directory appeared. The next year Tilghman Printing Co. published another Black directory, the Colored Directory of the Leading Cities of Northern California,

1916-1917.[113]

The next Black directory, the East Bay Colored Business Directory, was published by the California Voice Press in 1930. This directory provided information about the "economic, social, and educational status of the Negroes in the region." The tradition of the Black business directory has continued into the post-World War II period.[114]

Newspapers

Black newspapers have been continuously published in Oakland since the early 1890s. Over the decades the Black press has made a significant contribution to the development of Oakland's Black community. By reporting news of interest to Afro-Americans, by announcing the meetings of local lodges, churches, societies, and clubs, Oakland's Black press fostered a sense of identity, community, tradition, and pride that otherwise would not have existed. The Black press also encouraged the growth of Black business by printing ads and by publishing timely articles in support of the Black business establishment.[115]

Oakland's first Black newspaper, the Oakland Illustrated Guide, began publication in 1892. The Oakland Illustrated Guide, a four page weekly, was published by the Guide

Publishing Co., located at 777 Seventh Street. George Watkins, the owner and editor of the Guide, devoted his long career to the newspaper business. The Guide ceased publication in 1896. Following the demise of the Guide, George Watkins became involved in several other newspaper ventures.[116]

Oakland's second Black newspaper, the Oakland Sunshine, started publication in 1897. The Oakland Sunshine was founded by John Wilds, who also worked as a janitor and night watchman at City Hall. In 1909 Wilds sold the Sunshine to James Monroe Bridges, a furniture dealer. The Oakland Sunshine, having been published for over a quarter century, merged with the California Voice in 1923 and disappeared.[117]

From 1900 to 1920 three Black Oakland newspapers came into existence. The Western Outlook, first published in San Francisco in 1896, relocated to Oakland in 1910 and survived until 1929. Another Black newspapers, the Oakland Pacific Times, appeared briefly in 1912. The California Voice, established in 1919, lives today, Oakland's oldest Black newspaper, having been published for almost 70 years.

Oakland's Black press experienced a golden age in the 1920s. Several Black newspapers were published during this decade, including the Golden State, Independent, Times, Western Outlook, Western American, and the California Voice.

Only the California Voice survived the depression years of the 1930s.[118]

During the 1920s local Black reporters achieved recognition while reporting for both white and Black newspapers. Delilah Beasley worked for the Oakland Tribune, a white newspaper, as a reporter and a columnist. From 1923 to 1934 she wrote a column for the Oakland Tribune, entitled "Activities Among Negroes," which reported news relating to the Black community.

Delilah Beasley also received recognition as an historian. After almost 9 years of research, Beasley published The Negro Trail Blazers of California in 1919, and this book has remained an important source of information on the subject of Blacks in early California. In 1929 the Oakland Independent newspaper commented on her unique accomplishment.

> Miss Beasley has the distinction of being the first woman of any race to have written and published a history of a people and a state combined that has been accepted by historians throughout America.119

As a reporter for the Oakland Tribune Beasley had an impact that went beyond the publication of her column. During the 1920s, Bay Area newspapers often used derogatory racial expressions such as "darkie." Largely through her efforts the local white press ceased this obnoxious

practice. Delilah Beasley died in 1934.

Education

The Black society of early 20th century Oakland placed a high value on education. In particular the Black intelligentsia and the local Black press stressed the importance of scholastic achievement in the classroom. The public schools of Oakland, having been integrated since 1872, appeared to offer Blacks equal educational opportunity. Why then did Black students encounter problems in their quest for an education?

Despite the efforts to promote and encourage achievement in school, many deterrents existed which made it difficult for Black students to advance beyond elementary school. Prejudiced teachers and indifferent parents did not always provide students with adequate support or counseling. The children of low-income families had a high incidence of illness and school absences because they did not receive proper care and nourishment. Until the 1920s many private schools in the Bay Area would not accept Black students. Many parents could not afford to send their children through high school or college. Lack of opportunity due to discrimination also discouraged many Black students from continuing their education.[120]

According to Ida Jackson, Oakland's first public school teacher, the Oakland schools did not encourage Black students to attend college.

> In the early thirties, I had been appointed one of the counselors in Prescott Junior High School. The school population at that time was approximately 28 per cent Negro. Not only were the Negro students not encouraged to attend college, or continue their education in some field after high school, but it was the policy of the school to discourage them. Regardless of skills or the results of intelligence tests, many counselors would not program them for subjects that would enable them to have a solid foundation on which to build.121

Despite the above mentioned obstacles, a significant number of Black students in the Bay Area attended colleges and universities. A 1919 study of Black education in the Bay Area found that 7.4 percent of the Black population had attended a college or university and 1.8 percent had completed either three or four years of higher education. A college degree was considered a major achievement and an important status symbol in the Black Oakland community.[122]

A history of Black education in early 20th century Oakland should include a biographical sketch of Ida Jackson, who became the most prominent Black educator in the period between the wars. Originally from Mississippi, Ida Jackson attended New Orleans University and arrived in Oakland in 1917. She enrolled at U.C. Berkeley in 1920, and received a B.A. in 1922 and M.A. in 1923.[123]

When Ida Jackson received her first teaching assignment in 1925 at a high school in Imperial Valley, she became the first Black woman to teach in a California High School. Miss Jackson began her teaching career with the Oakland Public School system in 1926 and for years remained the only Black school teacher in Oakland. Miss Jackson first taught at Prescott Jr. High School in West Oakland and later in 1943 she was transferred to McClymonds High School where she taught U.S. history. Miss Jackson retired in 1953 after 27 years of service.[124]

The Black community did not rely on the public school system to educate their children. Many of the Black churches and institutions sponsored classes and educational programs for both children and adults. The Black "Y"'s taught vocational and business courses. Black clubs sponsored classes in art, music, and literature. During this period, the Black community also assumed responsibility for the teaching of Black History, since this subject was not part of the public school curriculum.

The study of Black History became a popular activity during the 20s and 30s in Black Oakland. Delilah Beasley's Negro Trail Blazers of California stimulated interest in the history of Blacks in California. In 1926 Dr. Carter

Woodson, Dean of Liberal Arts at Howard University, inaugurated Negro History Week, an annual event to be celebrated in the month of February. The Black Churches of Oakland began to celebrate Negro History Week on a regular basis by the 1930s. Mrs. Marcella Ford organized Negro History Week Programs for the Beth Eden Baptist Church from 1935 to 1940. E. Harold Mason, a Black Studies scholar, taught a class in Black Studies at the Beth Eden Baptist Church and also at the Linden Branch Y.W.C.A. during the 1930s. Thus, Black Studies classes and programs had become institutionalized in Black Oakland by the end of the 1930s decade.[125]

Politics

From 1900 to 1940 several developments occurred that changed the political landscape of Black Oakland. The rise of the Northern Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. in 1913 marked the beginning of a new era on the civil rights front. The Marcus Garvey movement had a decided influence on Black Oakland politics, and by the 1920s an active Oakland Chapter of the Universal Negro Improvement Association had been established. During this period, Black Unions were organized, and they exerted a political influence that had widespread repercussions. Black political leaders emerged who became active

in civil rights and in the local political arena. A diversity of political strains and movements existed in Black Oakland during the pre-World War 11 period, reflecting the political forces, both Black and white, that appeared at this time on the national scene.

Organized in c1894, the Afro-American League of Alameda County remained active after the turn of the century. At first the League stressed Black economic enterprise, an emphasis that suggests the influence of the Booker T. Washington school of thought. Later the League became involved in local politics, and in 1905 the League campaigned for John Wilds, editor of the Oakland Sunshine and City Hall janitor. Wilds ran for councilman-at-large in the City election, the first Black man to run for this office.[126]

The Afro-American League of Alameda County later became known as the Afro-American Council and continued to function into the World War 1 period. In 1909 the Afro-American Council investigated the treatment of Black prisoners and secured the release of several who had been the victims of false arrest. The 1909 Annual Report reads as follows:

> Through the influence of our Council we secured one pardon, saved one life, and secured from prison on account of false arrest thirty-eight persons.[127]

The Black Oakland community was influenced by

political developments that occurred on a national level. There is some evidence that a faction of the East Bay Black electorate supported the Progressive movement of the early 20th century. In 1913 the Oakland Sunshine in an editorial stated that the newspaper stood for

> Progressive government; working its way on down to a kind of socialistic basis, where might rest the foundation of a new society.[128]

The 1920s proved to be a period of political progress for Black Oakland. At this time the City of Oakland held district elections, a practice that increased the power of the Black vote in districts with a significant Black population. In return for their support of district candidates, Black voters were promised and often received patronage positions, an acknowledgement of the importance of the Black vote. This arrangement came to an end in 1930 when a city-manager type of government was installed and city-wide elections replaced district elections.[129]

Black political leaders unsuccessfully ran for political office in the 1920s. In 1926 William McFarland, General Chairman of the Dining Car Cooks and Waiters Union, ran for the 39th Assembly District in Alameda County. In 1929 M. N. Johnson, President of the North Oakland Improvement Club, also became a candidate for the 39th Assembly District.[130] Although both men lost, these campaigns represented progress

on the political front, since Black candidates for the first time ran for an assembly district in Alameda County.

Several political groups and organizations became active in Black Oakland during the 1900 to 1940 period, including the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the Northern Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Alameda County League of Colored Women Voters. These Black political organizations had different objectives and agendas, but they all had an impact on the political scene in Black Oakland.

A chapter of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, abbreviated U.N.I.A., was active in Oakland in the 1920s and 1930s. Organized in 1914 by Marcus Garvey, the U.N.I.A. advocated racial solidarity, Black nationalism, and a return to Africa. The U.N.I.A. experienced phenomenal growth and by the 1920s claimed to have almost a million members in 40 countries. Established in 1920, the Oakland chapter of the U.N.I.A. opened a large hall in 1928 located at the corner of 8th and Chester Streets in West Oakland. The Oakland U.N.I.A. chapter held meetings, lectures, rallies, dances, and celebrations. The typical U.N.I.A. meeting offered a poetry reading, drama skits, and, perhaps, a piano recital. Indian and Chinese guest speakers emphasized

the racial solidarity of the third world peoples, while denouncing white imperialism and the doctrine of white supremacy.131

In 1927 the Oakland U.N.I.A. held a convention in which the following subjects were discussed:

> Ways and Means of bringing about united effort among community leaders for best interest of race.
> Ways and Means of propogating Negro Culture in community.
> Ways and Means to better economic conditions in community.
> Reading and discussion of "Negro Bill of Rights."
> Discussing ways and means of disseminating race literature in community.132

This list provides information about the concerns of the Oakland Garveyites.

The more conservative elements of the Black community disapproved of the philosophy of Marcus Garvey. In 1922 the Oakland Sunshine criticized the U.N.I.A. in an editorial that expressed the fear that Garveyism with its racist implications would create a backlash in the white community.133 The success of the Garveyites, especially their ability to organize lower class Blacks, disturbed local N.A.A.C.P. officials, who considered the Garvey movement "a serious rival for members and status."134

Regardless of this opposition, the U.N.I.A. had a wide following in the 1920s, and many Black leaders considered it

to be a legitimate political movement. In June, 1927 several local Black leaders signed a petition for the release of Marcus Garvey who at the time was in prison for mail fraud. In 1932 Delilah Beasley, a respected columnist for the Oakland Tribune, lectured to a U.N.I.A. audience on the subject of the Black pioneers of early Oakland.[135]

The Alameda County League of Colored Women Voters emerged in the 1920s as a major political force in the East Bay Black community. Affiliated with the California League of Women Voters, the Alameda County League of Colored Women voters concerned itself with both local and national issues.

In the 1920s the League educated the Black community on political matters and at the same time fought against discrimination. From 1926 to 1928 Highland Hospital refused to admit Black women into the nurses training program. The League sponsored three Black women for the training program and pressured the hospital into accepting them. In the 1930s the League campaigned for relief bonds and supported the Community Chest in its effort to provide for the needy.[136]

The organization also became involved in issues of national concern. In 1934 the Alameda County League of Colored Women Voters, in cooperation with the N.A.A.C.P., sent letters in support of an anti-lynching bill that was

before Congress. The same year the League also worked for the equal rights of women.[137]

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, organized in 1911, had an important impact on the civil rights struggle in California. Two chapters of the N.A.A.C.P. were organized in California, a Southern Branch located in Los Angeles, and a Northern Branch located in Oakland. The Northern Branch of the N.A.A.C.P., organized in 1913 by Roy Nash, represented the cities of San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley, and within a period of six years the chapter had recruited over 1,000 members. Several Black leaders served as President of the Northern Branch, including Christopher Reuse, Walter Butler, John Drake, and C. L. Dellums.[138]

The Northern Branch became involved in both local and national issues. The Oakland chapter participated in the national N.A.A.C.P. campaign to eliminate Jim Crow laws and to support anti-lynching legislation. On a local level the Northern Branch fought for equal access in housing, education, and public accommodations. According to Delilah Beasley, the Northern Branch

> ...succeeded in having removed from the windows of restaurants discriminating signs and the preventing of photoplay houses from discriminating in the seating of colored patrons.[139]

From 1913 until World War 11 the Northern California N.A.A.C.P. fought prejudice on many fronts and succeeded in eliminating some of the more insidious forms of discrimination. During the teens the Northern Branch protested the showing of "Birth of a Nation," a controversial movie that portrayed Blacks in a negative light and glorified the Ku Klux Klan. In 1933 the Northern Branch collected funds for the defense of the Scottsboro boys. In 1938 the Oakland chapter took action to integrate the labor force working on a West Oakland housing project.[140]

During the first 30 years of its existence, the Northern Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. produced two types of leaders. The early presidents tended to be businessmen or attorneys who embraced the values of the white, middle-class establishment, and they steered the N.A.A.C.P. in a direction that reflected this bias. Following the rise of Black labor unions in the 1930s and 1940s, another type of leadership emerged that was sympathetic toward the aspirations of labor.[141]

The administration of Walter Butler is an excellent example of the former style of leadership. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Walter Archibald Butler arrived in California in 1878, attended schools in Oakland, and studied law in San Francisco. Butler pursued a successful career as an insurance

agent, and he built a large house on Excelsior Avenue in Oakland known as "West-Acres."[142]

In 1917? Walter Butler was elected President of the Northern Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. During his administration, Mr. Butler worked to eliminate restrictions on housing and public accommodations, which enabled upwardly mobile Blacks the opportunity to enjoy some of the luxuries of the white middle-class life style.[143]

The career of C. L. Dellums represents an interesting contrast. Originally from Texas, Cottrell Laurence Dellums arrived in Oakland soon after World War 1, worked as a porter, and joined the recently organized Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. In 1927 Dellums served as an officer in the union, and in 1929 he was elected Vice President of the BSCP.[144]

During the depression years of the 1930s and the war years of the 1940s, Dellums became involved in civil rights activities and union activities outside of the BSCP. As an officer in the N.A.A.C.P. Dellums fought for low cost housing and an end to job discrimination. In 1934 he encouraged Black workers on the waterfront, who along with their white co-workers were on strike, to join the Longshoremans Union. Dellums supported the construction of Campbell Village, a low cost housing project in West Oakland that opened in 1941,

and insisted that it operate on an integrated basis.

During World War 11, C. L. Dellums and the N.A.A.C.P. fought to eliminate job discrimination in the defense industries. In an attempt to integrate the transportation industry, Dellums pressured Key System to hire Black conductors for Oakland streetcars.

In 1944 Dellums became President of the Northern Branch of the N.A.A.C.P., and in 1968 he succeeded his mentor, A. Phillip Randolph, as President of the International Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.145

The Black protest groups that emerged in early 20th century Oakland, namely the U.N.I.A. and the N.A.A.C.P., had limited success in eliminating racism or improving conditions for the Black community. The elitist Black leaders who controlled the U.N.I.A. and the N.A.A.C.P., with the exception of C. L. Dellums, did not try to organize the rank and file of Black voters into a coherent political force. In order to achieve racial reform, Black political leaders, rather than establishing a political base, preferred to negotiate with white officials on a personal basis. The personal approach to politics ignored the need to organize the Black voter and avoided militant forms of protest, such as picketing or mass demonstrations. The back room technique of

political negotiation, although at times successful in influencing the Municipal Administration, seems to have retarded the organization of the Black voter on a grass-roots level. It should also be mentioned that the Black protest groups of this era were at times hesitant to address some of the more serious issues of concern to the Black community.146

Panama-Pacific International Exposition

During the first four decades of the 20th century, several events and developments occurred in the Bay Area and on a national level that had an impact on Black Oakland. The devastation caused by the 1906 earthquake resulted in a large migration of Blacks from San Francisco to Oakland. Because of this influx of Black refugees, the Black population of Oakland increased from 1,026 in 1900 to 3,055 in 1910. Black Oaklanders participated in the Panama-Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco in 1915 to celebrate the completion of the Panama Canal. Black Oaklanders also became involved in World War 1 both on the home front and on the battlefield. Lastly, Black Oakland suffered as a result of the Great Depression of the 1930s, an economic decline that increased unemployment and undermined the viability of Black institutions.

The opening of the 1915 Panama-Pacific International

Exposition in San Francisco generated considerable excitement in the East Bay Black community. Black Oaklanders organized a special exposition committee to assist Black visitors attending the fair, to provide them with information about housing, and make their stay comfortable. The committee discussed the possibility of developing an exhibit for the exhibition that would portray the Black contribution to California's history. Although this project never materialized, Black Oaklanders, nevertheless, participated in the exposition. The Food Exhibit Palace at the P.P.I.E. displayed an automatic citrus press, the creation of two East Bay Black inventors.[147]

Black Oaklanders contributed to the success of the exposition in other ways. The Call-Post newspaper sponsored a contest in 1915, asking readers to submit pet names for the P.P.I.E. The judging committee, appointed by Mayor Rolph of San Francisco, selected the name "Jewel City" from the 13,000 entries. The name Jewel City had been submitted by Miss Virginia Stephens, a Black school girl who lived in Oakland. In June, 1915 she rode on a float in a parade that passed through the exposition grounds. Virginia received the adulation of the Black Oakland community because of her unique contribution, and Delilah Beasley, at the time a reporter

for the Oakland Tribune, made sure that the press covered the story. Years later Virginia Stephens attended U.C. Berkeley and graduated from law school.148

World War 1

The euphoria of the P.P.I.E. experience had barely passed away when Black Oaklanders found themselves involved in World War 1 both on the home front and on the battlefield. One month after the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, Congress passed a selective service act that drafted young men from the ages of 21 to 31 years of age without regard to race.

Black soldiers participated in the war at a time when lynchings in the South and a race riot in St. Louis must have made many question what they were fighting for. On the same day that the first Black soldiers departed from Oakland for combat in Europe, the developer of the Santa Fe Tract, a housing project, introduced an ordinance to the City Council that restricted home ownership within the tract to whites. Beasley comments on the irony of this situation.

> ...while the mayor was bidding the Negro boys God-speed and an honorable return to Oakland, and nearly every Negro man, woman and child in Oakland was at the depot bidding the boys goodby, this ordinance was again introduced to the city council at this same hour.149

When Oakland's Black veterans returned from Europe,

they must have experienced the disillusionment of other Black soldiers because mainstream America "did not recognize the sacrifices made by Black soldiers."[150] After Oakland's Black soldiers returned from the war, they organized the Colonel Charles Young Post, a veterans group affiliated with the American Legion. John Holman, a veteran of the Mexican border expedition and the Great War, commanded the Colonel Charles Young Post, which in 1932 had 30 members.[151]

The Great War expanded job opportunities for Black Oaklanders and encouraged Black immigration to the East Bay. Black workers from outside the state, a large percentage of them from the South, migrated to Oakland, lured by the prospect of wartime employment. The census figures reflect this movement of Black immigrants to Oakland; from 1910 to 1920 the Black population of Oakland increased from 3,055 to 5,489.[152]

The East Bay became a major center for shipping and shipbuilding during World War 1, and a large number of Blacks found work in the shipyards. A tremendous demand for ships existed because merchant vessels were needed to transport supplies across the Atlantic to the Allied forces in Europe. One fourth of all merchant vessels launched during the

Great War were built in Oakland, and Moore Shipbuilding Company emerged as the major shipbuilding operation on the West Coast.[153]

Black workers arrived in Oakland at a time when there was a labor shortage on the waterfront, and they were hired to work in positions that had been previously closed to minority employees. The West Coast shipping industry for the first time hired Blacks as caulkers, riviters, and skilled helpers.

There was a negative side to shipyard employment. Some Bay Area shipyards refused to employ Black men or would only permit them to work at menial jobs. It should also be mentioned that most Black shipyard workers lost their jobs at the end of the war.[154]

Black porters also made temporary gains during World War 1. The United States government made concessions to several railroad unions in order to win their support for the home front war effort. The Railway Men's Benevolent Association, a Black union of railroad workers, successfully bargained for an increase in wages. As a result of this settlement Pullman porters received a monthly raise of 13 dollars. However, the power of Black railroad unions declined after the war, having been undermined by company

unions that were created to control railroad labor.[155]

There is considerable evidence that Black women also assisted in the war effort on the home front. Theodora Purnell, the wife of Dr. William Purnell, helped to organize a Black Red Cross auxiliary in Oakland. According to Beasley:

> The auxiliary of the Red Cross, under the leadership of Mrs. Purnell, did more active work and raised more money during a Red Cross drive than any other colored auxiliary in the United States.[156]

The President of the California State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, Hettie Tilghman, also contributed to the war effort on the home front, according to the following account:

> Mrs. H. B. Tillman (sic.), 8th president, was elected in 1917. The World War had laid its iron hand upon U.S., and all forces, including men and women were called into service. Club work ceased and the women were called into Red Cross service. Women's Army, War Camp, Community and State Council of Defense work. Mrs. Tillman (sic.) will always be known as "War President," and one who offered as sacrifice her only son, Charles. Upon the invitation of Mayor Davis of Oakland, she welcomed in behalf of "Mothers" the first contingent of boys on their return from "No Man's Land."[157]

The California State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs suspended normal activities and committed all resources to the war effort. Beasley writes:

> The California race women were enthusiastic in their

> effort to render service in the Red Cross during the recent World's War for Democracy. The State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs suspended all literary activities save the teaching of the different communities the value to the race of united war work in helping to win the war. The reports read at the annual meeting at Los Angeles and the appearance of the different auxiliaries, with their chairmen all in uniform, was an encouraging and inspiring sight. They aided in strengthening the Negro soldiers in the fight for a better place for the Negro people, after the war is won and peace has been declared and signed.[158]

Considering the discrimination that existed at the time, the Black women of Oakland and California made a remarkable contribution to the war effort.

Great Depression

The Great Depression of the 1930s had a severe impact on Oakland in general and the Black community in particular. As the economy slowed down Oakland industries began to lay off workers. Oakland's automobile industry, a major employer of Black workers, experienced a sharp decline in productivity, which resulted in numerous layoffs.[159] The railroad industry reacted to a reduction in passenger travel by cutting off cars and eliminating entire trains. Porters, redcaps, and waiters, the backbone of the Black Oakland work force, were laid off in the process. The shipping industry also lost business. Jobs on the waterfront dried up, which contributed to the problem of Black unemployment.[160]

Black women were also thrown out of work during the depression. As the economy worsened, white households laid off domestic servants in an effort to reduce living expenses.

By 1940 Black Oaklanders, although only 2 percent of the population, accounted for 12 percent of the unemployed.[161] The high rate of Black unemployment can be attributed not only to economic conditions but also to the fact that many jobs were closed to the Black worker. Job discrimination against the Black worker compounded the effects of the Great Depression.

A contemporary account of the depression years in Black Oakland describes a society fighting for survival. From 1923 to 1934 Delilah Beasley wrote a column for the Oakland Tribune that covered events and activities in Black Oakland. In March 1931 she wrote in her column that "Volunteer Colored Workers report considerable suffering among the people in the territory assigned to them in West Oakland." The same month she reported that "many Negro workers are unemployed."[162] This column also provides information about how the Black community responded to the crisis of the depression.

The major Black secular institutions of Oakland - the Old Folks Home, the Fannie Wall Children's Home, the Linden

Branch Y.W.C.A., and the Filbert Street Y.M.C.A. - operated as agencies of the Community Chest. Early in the depression Black leaders realized that the survival of their institutions depended on funding from the Community Chest. In 1931 Beasley stated in her column that Black institutions would have "closed their doors" without the support of the Community Chest.[163]

The leaders of the East Bay Black community became involved in the periodic drives to raise money for the Community Chest. Beasley organized a Standing Committee in 1931 in an attempt to educate Black citizens on the importance of the Community. The Alameda County League of Colored Women Voters campaigned for the Community Chest. The Colored Volunteer Workers joined the Army of Mercy, a group of 5,000 volunteers who collected funds for the Community Chest. Local Black ministers, knowing that many members of their congregations depended on relief, also supported the Community Chest. Some Black leaders responded to fund raising drives with considerable fervor. One elderly Black club woman, Mrs. Mary Grasses, too crippled to campaign on foot, solicited funds by telephone shortly before her death.[164]

The Black community did not wait to be rescued by the Community Chest. The problem of unemployment needed immediate

attention. In 1930 a local Black activist, John Fowler, opened an employment bureau at 720 Market Street in West Oakland, an agency where those looking for work could register. The Filbert Street Y.M.C.A. also set up an employment bureau in addition to offering "emergency aid and readjustment for stranded boys under 21 years." The Linden Branch Y.W.C.A., beginning in 1932, provided meals for the unemployed that could be purchased for only 15 cents. Linden Branch Y.W.C.A. also sponsored classes in vocational training and offered job placement services.[165]

Clubs and organizations were formed in an effort to assist the unemployed and the needy. The Christmas Sunshine Club, organized in 1932, collected clothing and toys for the unemployed to be given away at Christmas. The Delilah Beasley Club, composed of Black club women, was also organized in 1932 for the purpose of providing charity for the poor.[166]

Census statistics reveal the impact the depression had upon Black Oakland. From 1930 to 1940 the Black population increased almost 1,000 (7,503 to 8,462), during which time the Black male work force declined from 2,600 to 1,564.[167] Therefore, the Black male work force dropped by 40 percent while the population grew by a significant amount. With

more mouths to feed and far fewer men at work, the Black community struggled for survival.

With the close of the 1930s decade the old order of Black Oakland society, the society of segregated institutions and a segregated work force, came to an end. The explosion of World War 11 set in motion a chain of events and produced a level of expectations that radically changed the character of pre-war Black Oakland. The third period in Black Oakland's history, the modern era, 1940 to 1987, will be treated in a separate section.

Part 111: 1940 - 1987

World War 11

On Sunday, December 7, 1941 a Japanese naval force launched a surprise attack on the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The next day the U.S. Congress declared war on Japan, and America entered World War 11. The nation's industries shifted from the production of consumer goods to the production of military weapons, a transition encouraged by the availibility of lucrative goverhment contracts.

Because of its strategic location as a railroad and shipping center, Oakland soon became involved in the home front war effort. Moore Shipbuilding Co. assumed the task of converting and repairing vessels for wartime purposes. Several military installations were established in the Bay Area during the war, and Oakland acquired the Oakland Naval Supply Center and the Oakland Army Base. The Oakland Airport and the Oakland Harbor had to relinquish their facilities to the expanding military administration. Oakland's food packing plants proved to be a vital industry, since the Allied Forces relied heavily on U.S. food supplies.[1]

An acute labor shortage developed in the Bay Area as production demands increased. The sudden expansion of the ship building industry depended on the availability of a a large pool of manpower. In 1942 Henry J. Kaiser, engineer,

contractor, and industrialist, built several shipyards in the San Francisco Bay. The Kaiser shipyards mass produced hundreds of Liberty and Victory ships that supplied the Allied Forces with war materiel. Henry Kaiser and other California industrialists sent recruiters outside the state in search of a labor force. Kaiser offered high wages and medical benefits as an enticement for workers to come to the Bay Area. The recruiting efforts proved successful, especially in the South, as men and their families, both Black and white, boarded trains and buses bound for California.[2]

During the 1940s almost a half million Blacks, mostly from the Southern States, migrated to the West Coast to work in the defense industries. A significant number of these workers settled in Oakland. As a consequence of this great migration the Black population of Oakland increased from 8,462 in 1940 to 37,327 in 1945.[3]

Blacks migrated to the West Coast during World War 11 for several reasons. The promise of higher wages and a better standard of living had an irresistible appeal. The relative freedom of the Western States compared favorably to the oppression Blacks experienced in the South. Black migrants, having arrived on the West Coast, sent letters to their Southern relatives encouraging them to make the journey.[4]

Several breakthroughs occurred during World War 11 which enabled Black Oaklanders to work in occupations that had previously been closed to minorities. President Roosevelt recognized that it would be a terrible waste of manpower to permit discrimination in defense work at a time when a labor shortage existed. In 1941 President Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 8802 which made racial discrimination illegal in the national defense program.

Another breakthrough occurred when the Boilermakers Union set up separate Black auxiliary units. Membership in this union enabled Blacks to learn a trade and work in the shipyards as welders, drillers, riggers, chippers, caulkers, and helpers. Boilermakers Union A-26, Oakland's first Black local, was organized in 1942. Members met in a building located at 1315-7th Street in West Oakland.[5]

Because of the labor shortage, East Bay Black workers received occupational training in vocational schools and joined unions that had previously excluded Blacks. The following is a contemporary account, written in 1943, of this new development.

> In Oakland, at present, Negroes are being accepted in trade unions and for training in schools on a broader basis than ever before. The need for workers in wartime has resulted in the acceptance of Negroes into unions that heretofore did not permit membership. This

> is especially true of unions representing crafts used in shipbuilding, welding in particular. Many training classes in trade schools now contain Negroes, and in some of them nearly one-half of those enrolled are Negroes.[6]

The successful performance of the Black worker in critical defense jobs destroyed the myth that Black labor did not have the capability to work in skilled positions. In 1944 a local Black publication, We Also Serve, commented on the progress made by the Black defense worker in terms of perception.

> Prior to the second World War there were very few Negroes working in many crafts and industries. Today, due to the increase in production needs and the shortage of man power, employers who, heretofore, were reluctant to hire Negro labor, have been compelled to employ Negroes. Their contributions to the war effort have much to destroy the myth that the Negro is lazy and incompetent, and has no place in the industrial of the country except that of a common laborer and a "flunky." Although it is discouraging to be aware of the fact that it took a World War and dire necessity to show that Negroes could work as skilled craftsmen...[7]

The record shows that Black women also contributed to the war effort. According to a contemporary source, many Black women worked in the shipyards.

> Many hundreds of the Moore colored workers are women. They have trooped from the kitchen, the factory and the field, like their white sisters, to add the weight of their efforts to build the great Moore ships that ply the seven seas on behalf of the United Nations.[8]

The railroad hired Black women during World War 11. Elnor Payne worked for Southern Pacific as a fireman on a steam

locomotive. Luella R. Primm operated a 110 foot turntable that shunted freight engines.[9]

Black women contributed to the home front war effort in other ways. They served on the Hospitality Recreation Committee, a local chapter of the Defense Council. Black club women attended defense classes, joined sewing units, and worked as first aid instructors for the Red Cross. Many Black women visited and entertained troops in army bases as volunteers for the USO.[10] Linden Branch Y.M.C.A. members also entertained Black troops at the De Fremery USO Club House.

A large number of Black service men, from all branches of the military, were stationed in Oakland during World War 11. Less than a year after the war began a report estimated that 10,000 Black troops were quartered in the East Bay.

In order to provide a recreational facility for the Black service men, the De Fremery Hospitality House, a West Oakland recreation center, was converted to a USO Club House. This old building, built as a private residence in the 1860s, was located in De Fremery Park, two square blocks of lawns and trees on Adeline Street between 17th and 18th Streets. Following its conversion to a military club house, the De Fremery USO Club House, a 15,000 square foot building, had a canteen, lounge, and ball room on the first floor.

The second floor contained offices, a library, and a game room. A large dormitory could accommodate between 35 and 40 men.[11]

The USO provided the necessary staff, including professional, clerical, and maintenance, to operate the club. The Black Y.M.C.A., the Linden Branch Y.W.C.A., and local Black Women's Clubs provided entertainment for the service men staying at the De Fremery USO Club. The De Fremery USO Club House became the major recreational facility for East Bay Black soldiers during World War 11.[12]

The influx of thousands of Black migrants during World War 11 created a serious housing problem in Oakland. The arrival of large numbers of Black migrants created crowded living conditions, especially in West Oakland. According to one account, West Oakland "began to overflow."

> Then the war started, and that's when the big migration of people coming in, and this is when West Oakland began to overflow because there were too many people. I can remember we'd go down to the 16th Street station after school to watch the people get off the trains, and it was like a parade. You just couldn't believe that that many people would come in, and some didn't even have any luggage; they would come with boxes, with 3 or 4 children with no place to stay, and then there would be people there, and they'd ask everyone if they had any place to stay or could they make some space into rooms.[13]

No central registration agency existed to provide newcomers with information about housing. When Black migrants arrived in Oakland, they were picked up by trucks, driven to Black

neighborhoods, and dropped off at rooming houses.[14]

Living conditions became intolerable. Several men would often occupy a single room, and as many as 40 to 50 men were crammed into some of the larger houses. Blacks who tried to escape this congestion had difficulty relocating outside of the West Oakland district, since white property owners in other parts of the city refused to rent or sell property to minorities. Black leaders complained that the housing shortage encouraged landlords and agents to exploit "defenseless" Black tenants.[15]

Many Black families lived in low rent housing projects built by the Oakland Housing Authority. Located in West Oakland, Campbell Village opened in 1941 as an integrated project, Blacks occupying 60 percent of the units. Another West Oakland housing project, Peralta Villa, opened on an integrated basis (50 percent Black) in January, 1942. A third housing project, Lockwood Gardens, opened in May, 1942 but it was reserved for white tenants.[16]

Black defense workers also lived in temporary housing projects that were built during World War 11. Bayview Villa, located in West Oakland, opened in June, 1943, a temporary project that housed mostly Black tenants. Cypress Village, Willow Manor, and Magnolia Manor, named after the

streets where they were located, opened as all-Black housing projects. Black defense workers also lived at Peralta Villa and Chestnut Court, housing projects built by the Maritime Commission on Moore Dry Dock Company property.[17]

By the end of the war the housing shortage in Oakland had become the most serious problem facing the Black community. The out-of-state element did not return to their homes after the war as some had expected, and housing projects remained over occupied until 1948. People continued to live in dormitories and converted basements. Temporary housing units, built to last only for the duration of the war, had to be maintained indefinately. A large percentage of West Oakland houses lacked water and adequate sanitation facilities. Many Black families did not have the financial resources to repair their houses in order to bring them up to standard.[18]

White response

Before World War 11 Black residents constituted only a small percentage of the population of Oakland. In 1940 the Black population of Oakland numbered only 8,462, representing less than three percent of the total population of 302,162. By 1950 the Black population of Oakland had reached 47,562, an increase of almost 600 percent in 10 years.

The arrival of thousands of Black migrants resulted in a white backlash. Many white residents harbored feelings of resentment toward the Black newcomers because they were of a different race and culture. A similar white backlash occurred in other West Coast cities (Los Angeles, Portland, San Francisco, and Seattle) that received a large number of Black migrants during World War 11. [19]

The increase in racial prejudice can be attributed to many factors. Blacks who lived in Oakland before World War 11 for the most part worked in segregated jobs on the railroad and did not directly compete with white labor. World War 11 enabled Blacks to enter positions that had previously been reserved for white workers, and whites resented the loss of their monopoly on the job market. The movement of Blacks into white districts also created resentment, because of the belief that Black neighbors reduced property values.[20]

The white backlash in Oakland manifested itself in many ways. As more Blacks moved into West Oakland, white residents of that district moved into all-white neighborhoods or into the suburbs. Blacks found it difficult to move out of West Oakland because racial covenants barred their entrance into white neighborhoods. By the end of the war Oakland had become a segregated city.[21]

In 1944 a race riot occurred in downtown Oakland that

increased racial tension in the city. A fight started on a Key System Train that had stopped at 12th and Broadway. The free-for-all fight, which involved white servicemen and civilians and Black servicemen and civilians, spread out into the street, attracting a mob of 2,000. The Oakland Police, the Shore Police, and the Military Police had to be called out to stop the riot. Before order could be restored several windows on the train had been broken and five participants had received knife wounds.[22]

The Observer, a local white newspaper, commented on the riot in an editorial, complaining that the Black newcomers had violated the "understanding" that had existed between the white residents and the pre-war Black community.

> That riot on Twelfth street the other day may be the forerunner of more and larger riots because we now have (a) a semi-mining camp civilization and (b) a new race problem, brought about by the influx of what might be called socially-liberated or uninhibited Negroes who are not bound by the old and peaceful understanding between the Negro and the white in Oakland, which has lasted for so many decades, but who insist upon barging into the white man and becoming an integral part of the white man's society.[23]

Race riots also occurred in other cities across the country, including Detroit, Harlem and Beaumont, Texas, during World War II. The typical response of a riot-torn city was to set up an interracial committee to diffuse racial tension.[24]

In 1947 the Mayor of Oakland, Joseph E. Smith organized a Committee on Civic Unity, an interracial committee of Black and white community leaders. In 1948 the Committee on Civic Unity drafted an ordinance that made it a misdemeanor for the City of Oakland as an employer to discriminate "because of race, creed, color, national origin or ancestry."[25] After a heated debate the City Council, dominated by a conservative majority, refused to pass the ordinance.

In the late 1940s police brutality became an issue in the Black Oakland community. The East Bay Civil Rights Congress, a left-wing political organization, investigated charges that police beat up Black citizens on a regular basis. Jessica Mitford, at the time an Oakland resident and political activist, participated in the investigation and reported the following in her autobiography:

> I found it hard to describe adequately the monstrous beastliness, authority clothed in nightmare garb, that our investigations disclosed. We discovered that on Fridays, payday for most workers, police would regularly lie in wait outside the West Oakland bars that served as banks for the cashing of pay checks, arrest those emerging on charges of drunkenness, and in the privacy of the prowl cars beat them and rob them of their week's pay en route to the West Oakland police station.[26]

Having been alerted by the East Bay Civil Rights Congress, a state legislative committee also investigated the charges of police brutality in Oakland. The committee

heard testimony from 33 Black citizens who were the victims of police beatings and other forms of abuse. The committee concluded in a report that "it would be expected...that some degree of truth exists in the complaints of citizens...." The twenty-six police who were involved in the investigation denied the charges.[27]

These investigations did not result in the reform of the police department. Police Chief Divine refused to admit that a problem existed, and demands for a police review board were ignored.

Because of police violence, many Blacks by 1950 had developed a hatred for the Oakland police. One minister commented that "there seems to be a deep-rooted feeling among Negroes that the police are a common enemy."[28] This attitude remained unchanged for several years.

West Oakland

World War 11 transformed West Oakland into a Black community. Thousands of Blacks migrated to the East Bay in response to the call for shipyard workers, and a large number settled in West Oakland, displacing the other ethnic groups who lived there. By 1950 85 percent of the Black population of Oakland lived in the West Oakland district.

West Oakland continued to function as the cultural,

economic, and institutional center of Black Oakland for several years after the war. West Oakland remained the home of many Black institutions. Oakland's two oldest churches - Beth Eden Baptist Church and the First A.M.E. Church - were located in the West Oakland community. Numerous lodges and societies also had their headquarters in the West Oakland district during the post-war period.[29]

The Black business district of West Oakland, which had its origin in the 19th century, continued to prosper after World War 11. West Oakland had two major commercial strips, Market Street and 7th Street. According to the following account, 7th Street at the end of the war consisted of a mixture of legitimate and illegal businesses.

> 7th Street was a bustling area. It was alive with businesses and shops and after hours gambling places and houses of prostitution and drug stores and night clubs, really alive with action all the time. It was quite an area. It was maybe not a baby Harlem, but if one existed, it probably was. That's where everything happened...Everything was down there on 7th Street between Market and Pine...everything.[30]

The West Oakland business district offered everything in terms of goods and services for the neighborhood to be self-sufficient. Black professionals set up practice in the West Oakland business district. Black doctors and dentists opened several offices on 7th Street between Filbert and Union Streets.[31]

Unfortunately, West Oakland was unable to maintain its dominent position as the center of Black commerce and Black culture. For the last 30 years West Oakland has experienced a decline in population and economic activity, partly as a result of ill-conceived government projects. The viability of the West Oakland Black community was undermined by the impact of freeway construction, housing projects, and transportation projects.

The Oakland City Council designated West Oakland a "blighted" area after World War 11, because many of the houses were thought to be substandard and uninhabitable. The "blighted" designation had serious consequences, encouraging urban planners to target West Oakland as a likely district for public housing projects. The residents of West Oakland did not consider their neighborhood a slum. One resident commented: "West Oakland didn't have the slums they said we had. It was pure racism."[32]

From the 1940s to the 1970s, over a period of four decades, several housing projects have been built in West Oakland. The projects all had a name - Campbell Village, Peralta Villa, Acorn Project, Oak Center Project - and the results were mostly the same. Entire neighborhoods were levelled, residents uprooted, houses and buildings demolished,

churches and institutions torn down, all in the name of progress.[33] These projects damaged the cohesiveness of the neighborhood and forever changed the character of the community.

Freeways also had a negative impact on West Oakland. Completed in 1958, the elevated section of the Nimitz Freeway cut through the heart of West Oakland dividing it in half, a juggernaught that destroyed houses and industry in its path. Built to speed traffic through West Oakland to the Bay Bridge, the double decked freeway stands as a visual and physical barrier, isolating the Prescott neighborhood, located West of the Nimitz Freeway, from the rest of Oakland.[34] The recently completed Grove-Shafter Freeway also serves as a barrier that separates West Oakland from the downtown area.

The termination of train and ferry service to the Oakland Mole had an adverse effect on the economy of West Oakland. For several decades the main line of the Southern Pacific Railroad terminated at the end of 7th Street at the Oakland Mole. Passengers arriving at the Oakland Mole train depot would transfer to the ferry and cross the Bay to San Francisco. Ferry service to San Francisco declined after the completion of the Oakland-San Francisco Bay Bridge in

1936 and discontinued altogether in 1958. Two years later in 1960 the Southern Pacific Railroad terminated train service to the Oakland Mole, and passenger trains were rerouted to the 16th Street Railroad Station.[35] The loss of the railroad resulted in a loss of jobs for porters, dining car attendents, and redcaps as well as a loss of business for the Black commercial district on 7th Street.

The West Oakland neighborhood of Prescott, located west of the Nimitz Freeway, suffered from the devastation of post-World War 11 government projects. In 1969 a giant Post Office facility was constructed at 7th and Wood Streets. Acres of homes and businesses had to be demolished to make room for this huge $25,000,000 building.[36] Hundreds of families had to be uprooted in order to clear the area for this project. After the completion of the Post Office a decision was made to increase the parking area. In order to expand the parking lot four more blocks of houses had to be demolished.

The construction of the BART station and the BART elevated tracks along 7th Street had a serious impact on the Prescott neighborhood of West Oakland. The Oakland West Bay Area Rapid Transit Station, located between 5th and 7th Streets and Center and Lewis Streets, was completed

in 1972. Blocks of housing had to be razed before this project could be completed.[37]

The construction of the elevated BART tracks also had a negative impact on the neighborhood. The Black business district on the south side of 7th Street had to be removed for the BART right of way. These two projects wiped out half of the Black commercial strip on 7th Street, completely transforming the character of the neighborhood.[38]

The Prescott neighborhood declined as a result of the termination of railroad and ferry service and the destruction of housing that displaced thousands of residents. The decline of the Prescott neighborhood is reflected in the population statistics. Since World War 11, the Prescott neighborhood has experienced a serious loss of population. In 1950 the Prescott neighborhood had a population of 22,000. By 1970 the population had dropped to 11,000 and by 1980 the population of Prescott was less than 6,000.

The West Oakland of the 1940s and 1950s no longer exists. The Black railroad subculture, the pride of West Oakland for almost a century, has passed away. Many of the landmarks have disappeared. Many of the old churches and institutions have been torn down. The stores along the 7th Street Black business district have been boarded up and now

stand vacant. West Oakland is no longer the cultural and commercial center of Black Oakland.

Although West Oakland has suffered from adversity, there have also been some positive developments. The West Oakland Health Center, located at 700 Adeline Street, opened in 1969, providing medical care, dentistry, and nutritional advice for the local residents. The Health Center is community controlled.[39] The Acorn Supermarket, located at 12th and Market Streets, opened in 1970, the "first Black owned and operated supermarket in Oakland."[40] In 1977 a new West Oakland Library opened at the corner of 18th and Adeline Streets in a building that also serves as a community center.

Jubilee West, a non-profit community organization, provides numerous services for the Prescott neighborhood. Jubilee West was established in 1980 by the St. Patrick's Church, a West Oakland church that has been in existence for over a century. The organization purchases houses and sells them at a reasonable rate to low income residents, a service that discourages speculation in housing. Jubilee West also operates a job placement center in an effort to lower the unemployment rate of the Prescott neighborhood which in 1985 reached 22 percent. Jubilee West is supported

by Catholic, Baptist, and Methodist Churches and receives funding from the government.[41]

East Oakland

East Oakland is a large district, stretching from Lake Merritt to the San Leandro border, a distance of seven miles. Originally a white working class community, East Oakland lost much of its white population to the suburbs during the 1950s and 1960s. While this white exodus took place, thousands of Blacks living in West Oakland, having been displaced by redevelopment projects, moved to East Oakland. Within a short period of time many East Oakland neighborhoods went from white to Black.

East Oakland is now an integrated, ethnically diverse community. Many minority groups have moved into the Brooklyn neighborhood east of Lake Merritt, including Blacks, Chinese, Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians, Central Americans, Haitians, and West Indians. The Fruitvale neighborhood in central East Oakland has attracted a large Hispanic population (perhaps 30 percent) and still retains a significant white population. The area east of 82nd Avenue (City Council District 7) is predominantly Black (81 percent).[42]

The Black community that emerged in East Oakland differed in many respects from the old West Oakland Black

community. When Blacks moved to East Oakland they did not find a system of social organizations that existed in West Oakland. East Oakland did not have well established Black neighborhoods that had a history of cooperation and community organization. The Blacks who moved to East Oakland were strangers, and it took time for a community to develop.

The Black residents of East Oakland, as well as their ethnic neighbors, have experienced some serious problems over the last decade. The East Oakland Black community has suffered from chronic unemployment, a drug epidemic, a crime wave, and the blight of abandoned houses. Many East Oakland residents also consider the proliferation of liquor stores and storefront churches a serious problem.

The unemployment problem has been particularly intractable. Since World War 11 Oakland has shifted from a manufacturing to a white-collar service economy. The blue-collar workers of East Oakland have found it difficult to qualify for the white-collar jobs generated by the service sector. By preparing job seekers for the service oriented job market, the vocational training centers of East Oakland are attempting to correct this imbalance.[43]

For the last 20 years the Black commercial districts of East Oakland have experienced an economic decline. East 14th Street, 7 miles long, runs the length of East Oakland,

from Lake Merritt to San Leandro, from 1st Avenue to 98th Avenue. Once a prosperous commercial strip, East 14th Street is now in places lined with closed down gas stations, empty factories, vacant lots, burned out buildings, and boarded up shops. Many of the new businesses that have opened along East 14th Street are fast food franchises, businesses that, unlike the manufacturing industries of the past, do not pay a living wage.[44]

Black teenage unemployment in East Oakland, reaching 60 percent in some neighborhoods, is partly responsible for the rise of gangs that have been involved in drug dealing and acts of vandalism. A few years ago unemployed Black teenagers, many of whom belonged to gangs, rode busses for several hours a day, passing the time by stealing wallets and purses and committing acts of vandalism. In response to this problem AC Transit formed the Bay Area United Youth, a group of ex-hoodlum bus riders who now work as special security guards on the busses. They also visit schools to convince kids that stealing and vandalism damages the entire community. Incidents of crime and vandalism on busses have decreased dramatically as a result of this program.[45]

Chronic Black unemployment is one reason why the drug gangs of East Oakland have flourished. Three major drug

gangs have emerged in East Oakland since 1975: the 69 Mob, The Family, and Funktown U.S.A. The gangs found it easy to recruit teenagers into the drug business with the lure of big money. Competition between these rival gangs has resulted in numerous shootouts and killings, and at times entire neighborhoods have been terrorized by drug war violence.[46] The police have cracked down on drug dealers, several gang leaders have been arrested, but the drug gang subculture has survived, and drug dealing remains a problem in many East Oakland neighborhoods.[47]

City officials have been slow to respond to the demands of the East Oakland community, and the neighborhoods have been forced to organize in order to get results. In 19 the Catholic Priests at St. Elizabeth's Church in the Fruitvale District established the Oakland Training Institute, a program that trained neighborhood activists to organize for social and political protest. Several East Oakland neighborhood groups were organized in this manner, and they soon formed a coalition called "Oakland Community Organizations."[48]

OCO has attacked numerous problems in East Oakland with considerable success. Only a few years ago there were over 800 abandoned, boarded up houses in East Oakland, some

owned by absentee landlords, others vacant due to HUD foreclosures. These vacant houses gave the community a run-down, blighted appearance. Neighborhood groups, organized by OCO contacted owners and demanded that they fix up their homes and find tenants. In response to community pressure the City Council approved of a program that provided loans for home repairs and located tenants for vacant houses. This program greatly reduced the number of abandoned houses in East Oakland and encouraged OCO to tackle other issues.[49]

There are signs that East Oakland has endured the worst and things are improving. The instability that characterized the East Oakland Black neighborhoods of the 1960s and 1970s no longer exists. Neighborhood watches have reduced the crime rate. Several notorious dope gang leaders have been jailed and gang war violence has subsided. Black churches have become involved in the problems of East Oakland, developing programs for drug abusers, the homeless, and the unemployed. East Oakland neighborhood groups have been organized for political action. East Oakland community leaders share an optimism that Black East Oakland will survive and prosper.[50]

Housing

Oakland's Black community has had to deal with three

major problems since World War 11: a housing shortage, high unemployment, and drug abuse. The housing shortage dates back to World War 11, and, despite the completion of numerous housing projects, remains today a serious issue. The high level of Black unemployment is a phenomenon that had its origin in the period following the war. The drug problem is a more recent development, having emerged as an issue in the 1970s.

For several years after World War 11 the Black population of Oakland was largely confined to the West Oakland district, an area that had a serious housing problem. During the 1960s and 1970s urban renewal projects and freeway construction destroyed a large percentage of the housing stock of West Oakland and displaced thousands of residents.[51] On the positive side urban renewal in some instances has replaced deteriorated housing with modern apartments and townhouses and rehabilitated some of the old houses that date back to the Victorian era.

The origin of urban renewal in Oakland dates back to 1949 when the City Planning Commission issued a report that designated West Oakland as a "blighted" area, because many of the old houses were substandard according to the building code. In 1954 Mayor Houlihan created OCCUR (Oakland Citizens Committee for Urban Renewal), a committee that advocated

the redevelopment of Oakland. The original members of OCCUR represented real estate, business, and construction interests. No one on the committee represented the West Oakland Black community.[52]

For three years OCCUR campaigned for the redevelopment of West Oakland, and finally in 1957 the plan received the approval of the City Council. The same year the Planning Commission drafted a plan, known as the General Neighborhood Renewal Plan, that called for no less than five urban renewal in West Oakland totalling 225 acres.[53]

The first project, the Acorn Project, began in 1962. Bounded by 8th and 10th Streets and Union and Filbert Streets, the Acorn Project covered 200 acres. The purpose of the Acorn Project was to clear the neighborhood of badly deteriorated homes and buildings and replace them with new housing. OCCUR hoped that the new housing would attract an affluent, integrated class of tenants who would spend money in the downtown district and revitalize the sagging retail business. Part of the Acorn land (33.5 acres) was set aside for commercial and industrial development.[54]

The Acorn Project emphasized demolition rather than rehabilitation. Almost every structure in the project zone was bulldozed to the ground, including the old Fannie Wall

Home, which had to relocate. Only three buildings survived the destruction, a church, mortuary, and one home. It has been estimated that 41 percent of the demolished Acorn structures, approximately 333 buildings, could have been rehabilitated.[55]

The Acorn Project had disastrous consequences for the neighborhood. Approximately 9,000 residents had to relocate, and for several years the area resembled a war zone.[56] The Acorn Project destroyed acres of low-income housing, creating a shortage of inexpensive housing that exists in Oakland to this day. The community feeling, which once existed between neighbors, could not easily be restored.

The Acorn project experienced numerous delays and was not completed until 1974. Only 1,000 new residential units, consisting of townhouses and apartments, were built by Acorn. Since the project displaced 9,000 people, the net result was a loss of housing for the Black community. Efforts to integrate Acorn did not succeed, and it became an all-Black housing project.

The Oak Center neighborhood of West Oakland, located north of the Acorn Project, became the next area slated for redevelopment. Before the project got started the home owners of Oak Center formed the Oak Center Neighborhood Association. OCNA existed to protect the neighborhood

from the indescriminate destruction that occurred in the Acorn Project. The OCNA cooperated with the Oakland Redevelopment Agency in preparing a plan that minimized demolition. The creation of OCNA marked the beginning of neighborhood control of the urban renewal planning process.[57]

The Oak Center Urban Renewal Project began in 1967. At the time the largest rehabilitation project in the West, the Oak Center Project, bounded by 10th and 18th Streets and Brush and Cypress Streets, covered a 56 block area totalling 205 acres. Years later when the project was completed, over 400 structures had been restored and almost 500 new housing units built.[58] A 195 unit highrise for the elderly, Oak Center Towers, was built at the corner of 14th and Market Streets. Large scale demolition did occur. A large number of old houses were torn down to make room for a playground and a new school.

Before work could begin on the next urban renewal project, the residents of West Oakland organized in an effort to gain control of the redevelopment process. In 1967 the West Oakland Planning Council came into existence, a congress of representatives from every major organization in the district. The first President of the organization, Ralph Williams, became known as the "Mayor of West Oakland."[59]

The WOPL extracted concessions from the city and eventually gained control over redevelopment in West Oakland.

West Oakland residents, in search of better housing or displaced by redevelopment projects, often found it difficult to move to other neighborhoods. White home owners living in exclusive neighborhoods signed protective covenants, and real estate boards conspired to exclude minorities from white districts. Black lawyers and Black real estate agents responded in an effort to end this practice. Black lawyers challenged racial covents in the courts while Black real estate agents engineered the break up of of exclusive white districts.[60]

Discrimination in housing became a serious issue, and in 1961 Black activists approached Mayor John Houlihan and pressured him into taking action. Mayor Houlihan appointed the Committee on Full Opportunity to investigate the problem. After four years of study the committee issued a report (Fred Hunter Report) which found discrimination in housing to be widespread. Mayor Houlihan, a Republican, dismissed the committee and ignored the report.[61]

In 1963 the California Legislature passed the Rumford Fair Housing Act that made discrimination in housing illegal. This bill was sponsored by Byron Rumford, a Black

Assemblyman who represented the Seventeenth Assembly District, a district that included both Berkeley and West Oakland.[62] The Rumford Fair Housing Act provided a legal basis for the fight against segrgated housing, but the practice continued in Oakland long after the passage of the Rumford bill.

There are other factors that contribute to the housing crisis in Oakland. The city's rent stabilization ordinance permits landlords to increase rent by eight percent each year, and there is no limit to the increase when a rental unit is voluntarily vacated. The shortage of rental housing and the absence of an effective rent control ordinance serves to drive up the cost of housing. Between 1980 and 1983 rents in Oakland have increased by 33 percent, which has forced low-income renters to pay a larger percentage of their income for housing.[63]

The Black population of Oakland is no longer confined to the flatlands area of East and West Oakland. Over the years a large number of Black professionals have moved into the affluent hill area that had previously been a white preserve. The rising prices of hill district homes, however have made it more difficult for the Black home buyer to move into this exclusive neighborhood.

Although Oakland has the reputation for being "the most integrated of all U.S. cities," Blacks still encounter housing problems.[64] The occasional housing bias suit reminds one that the Rumford dream of fair housing has not been realized. Rents continue to be high because of a low vacancy rate (2 percent in 1985) in rental housing. Newspaper stories about the homeless sleeping in abandoned buildings, in cars, and under bridges remind one that the housing shortage remains critical.

The large number of low-income families aggravates the housing problem because inexpensive housing is scarce. According to the Office of Community Development, in 1985 over 100,000 Black females lived in Oakland who earned less than $12,000 a year. Public housing can not accommodate such numbers.[65] In an effort to alleviate the housing shortage, the City of Oakland has developed several programs for low-income residents. Oakland finances low-income housing projects by issuing revenue bonds. These projects are built by non-profit organizations, such as churches. About 30 low-income housing projects are currently under construction.

There are housing programs to assist both renters and home owners. One program provides low-cost home

rehabilitation loans and mortgage loans for home owners. Over 8,000 Oakland homes are presently being subsidized under this arrangement. A new voucher program provides subsidies for qualified renters. Oakland has the reputation for being a "leader in solving housing problems."[66]

Employment

Black unemployment in Oakland has been a problem ever since the end of World War 11.

During World War 11 Black workers found employment on the docks and in the shipyards of Oakland, working at jobs considered vital to the war effort. These jobs, having been created by the war, proved to be temporary in nature, and they disappeared when the war ended.[67] The Bay Area shipbuilding industry began to decline in 1944, and by the end of 1945 most shipyard jobs had vanished.

Black shipyard employees who were laid off at the end of the war soon discovered that few peacetime jobs existed for the minority worker. By practicing a hiring policy that favored whites, industrial employers in the East Bay contributed to the problem of Black unemployment. Local unions also contributed to Black unemployment by excluding minorities from union membership. Blacks who did find work during this transitional period often worked for wages much

lower than the high paying jobs of World War 11. The Black worker entered a post-war period of economic depression, characterized by high unemployment, underemployment, and low wages.[68]

The Black unemployed often had the unpleasant experience of standing in long lines at the unemployment office only to be told that they were not sufficiently trained or educated to find a decent job. They collected unemployment checks, spent their savings, cashed in their war bonds, and when the money ran out went on relief. The wife sometimes had to find work as a cook or a housekeeper in order to support the family.[69]

The era of high unemployment in Oakland's Black community continued through the 1950s and into the 1960s. The problem of Black unemployment had far reaching consequences, creating a cycle of welfare dependency, slum housing, segregated schools, and other related difficulties.[70]

The 1960s proved to be a pivotal decade in the drive to end job discrimination. In 1965 Watts, a Black community in Los Angeles, exploded into an orgy of violence, looting and destruction that continued for four days. President Johnson appointed a team of experts to examine the racial climate of other cities, and they concluded that Oakland, as an economically "depressed area," could erupt into another Watts.[71]

In response to the threat of racial disturbances Congress passed the Economic Development Administration Act in August, 1965, an experimental program designed to create jobs in areas of high unemployment.

The EDA program came to Oakland in 1966 at a time when Black unemployment in Oakland fluctuated between 15 and 20 percent.[72] Within a short period of time the EDA funded a $23,000,000 public works program that involved the expansion of airport and port facilities and the building of an industrial park. A large number of unemployed Blacks needed to be trained before they could work on these construction projects. The East Bay Skills Center, established by Peralta College and the EDA, trained Blacks for jobs generated by EDA projects.[73] Construction unions had to be pressured into accepting Blacks who completed the Peralta training program.

The EDA placed hundreds of Blacks in construction jobs. The EDA did not solve the problem of Black unemployment in Oakland, but the program convinced many Blacks at a critical time that the government was making a serious effort to do something about minority unemployment.[74]

During the 1960s and 1970s, the City of Oakland attempted to overcome a long history of discrimination against the hiring and promotion of minorities. Many city departments functioned on a segregated basis as late as the 1950s.

For example, the Fire Department operated a segregated firehouse of Black firemen until 1953.[75] Several years passed before the city abandoned its policy of segregation and adopted a policy of affirmative action.

In 1966, during the administration of Mayor Reading, the City of Oakland's Civil Service Commission adopted a policy of non-discrimination in the hiring of new employees, Oakland's first affirmative action measure. In 1969 the City Council passed a resolution calling for the city to make an effort to "carry out its obligations to the residents of the City of Oakland in employing, and in encouraging and assisting others to employ the unemployed and underemployed residents."[76]

In 1969 the Alameda County Legal Aid Society charged that the Police Department discriminated against minorities in hiring and promoting practices. In response to this suit the city agreed to step up the hiring of minorities in the Police Department so that personnel would be representative of the local Black population.

In 1970 the Black population of Oakland numbered 124,710, or about one third of the total population of the city. Despite affirmative action, the City of Oakland's workforce in 1970 still did not reflect the racial composition of the city. In 1971 the City of Oakland approved

an affirmative action policy that called for City departments to achieve a racial balance that was more in line with the ethnic population. This affirmative action policy increased minority employment in the City's workforce from 23 percent in 1971 to 35 percent in 1975.[77] By 1981 the City's workforce had a minority representation of 47 percent and a Black representation of 33 percent, at a time when Blacks comprised 47 percent of the population. After several years of affirmative action Black employment in the City workforce was still 14 percent below parity.

In 1974 the City of Oakland began to receive funds for another job training program, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, passed by Congress in 1973. With 27 percent of the West Oakland labor force unemployed, the CETA program provided jobs for minorities at a critical time. By 1976 over 600 CETA workers were employed by the City of Oakland. The Oakland Unified School District, the Port of Oakland, and the Oakland Housing Authority also hired CETA employees.[78] The CETA program lasted for many years, but it finally came to an end in 1983 during the Reagan administration.[79]

In recent years employment opportunities for Blacks in the private sector have not been promising. A general decline in Oakland's industrial base has reduced the number

of blue collar jobs, a process that shows no signs of diminishing. In 1987 the City Manager, Henry Gardner, provided reasons for Oakland's economic decline.

> The facts are, among others, that Oakland's downtown retail has for some time been in decline and that too many Oakland citizens leave the community to make major purchases...that the exodus of higher paying base manufacturing jobs from Oakland (and the rest of older industrial America) has diminished and destabilized our citizens' employment opportunities; that the service industry jobs which are gradually replacing the manufacturing base are generally lower paying...80

As long as the economy of Oakland is in the doldrums, Black unemployment will remain a difficult problem to solve.

Drug problem

Many experts are convinced that the high unemployment rate amongst Black teenagers has contributed to the drug epidemic.

Drug dealing in Oakland has been around, on a small scale, for a long time, but in the 1970s it became a very serious issue because of the emergence of organized drug gangs. In 1975 Felix Wayne Mitchell, an enterprising heroin dealer, organized the Sixty Ninth Avenue Mob, a dope gang that operated out of the San Antonio Villa Housing project in East Oakland. The Mob, which at one time numbered 200, expanded its activities to other Oakland housing

projects and eventually into the cities of Berkeley and Richmond. The Mob had no trouble finding customers, since there are an estimated 15,000 heroin addicts who live in Alameda County.[81]

In 1980 Milton "Mickey" Moore organized another dope ring called "The Family" that operated out of the Lockwood Gardens housing project. Lockwood Gardens was located near San Antonio Villa, rivalry between the two gangs developed into a gang war, and a series of shootings occurred in August, 1980 that left 6 people dead.[82] This marked the beginning of the Oakland drug war, a war characterized by drive-by shootings and random violence.

Felix Mitchell was arrested in February, 1983, and Mickey Moore was arrested in December, 1984. Although the two gangs were broken up the drug war continued. By 1984 other drug rings had come into existence, selling a variety of narcotics, including heroin, cocaine, and marijuana. The new gangs, operating in the flatlands of East and West Oakland, proved to be as violent as their predecessors.

Sour drug deals and fights over turf have fed the violence that often results in fatal shootings. Semi-automatic assault rifles, such as the Uzi, have become a favorite weapon of the drug gangs, and in many neighborhoods the sound of gunfire is not uncommon. The random

firing of high-powered weapons has been responsible for the deaths of bystanders and other innocent people.[83]

The drug wars have been fought in the Black neighborhoods of the flatlands, and Blacks have been the victims. Drug related killings have contributed to Oakland's upward homicide spiral. From 1980 to 1986 approximately 22 percent of all Oakland killings were drug related (193 out of 871). Oakland's homicide toll for 1986 proved to be a record 146, 38 of which were drug related. As in the past, most of the 1986 murder victims and suspects were Black males.[84] Oakland's drug murders have received considerable publicity in the media, and the city's reputation has been damaged as a result.

The flatland drug wars have divided Oakland into two different zones. The Black and white residents of the prosperous hill area have not been affected by the violence. The hill district (as well as many flatland neighborhoods) remains safe and relatively crime free. In contrast the hot spot areas of the East and West Oakland flatlands have been transformed into "zones of fear and intimidation" for the majority of residents who just want to live ordinary lives.[85]

In inner-city districts where unemployment approaches 50 percent, the drug life has a strong attraction for

teenagers who are looking for a quick way out of poverty. The illegal drug market in Oakland is a multi-million dollar business, and there is a strong economic incentive for kids to drop out of school and join the drug gangs. Kids as young as 9 or 10 are recruited by gangs and paid $250 a week to act as lookouts for the police. At the age of 15 they are promoted to "sergeant." Their assignment is to hold heroin filled balloons in their mouth and swallow them if the police arrive. At 18 a loyal gang member is promoted to "lieutenant," earning up to $1,000 a week for transporting drug money to the "general."[86] This kind of money lures youngsters to the dope gangs. The alternative at best is to work for "chump change" at a fast-food restaurant.

By 1984 neighborhood groups, irate citizens, and churches had become alarmed about the crime and violence spawned by the drug culture, and they decided to do something about it. Oakland Community Organizations (OCO), a coalition of community groups, formulated a plan to fight the drug problem. OCO identified some of the worst hot spots of drug dealing and relayed this information to the police so they could patrol the areas of heavy drug activity. OCO also formed a committee to monitor the courts to make sure that convicted drug dealers received stiff jail

sentences.[87]

Neighborhood groups and church groups began to march in the streets in a show of force to warn drug dealers that their activities would no longer be tolerated. The most spectacular march against drugs, the "March for Righteousness," was organized by Pastor J. Alfred Smith Sr. of the Allen Temple Baptist Church. On November 22, 1986 12,000 people marched to City Hall. Pastor addressed the audience stating that

> No longer can we watch as your communities become safe for the drug pushers and not for the people.

The March of Righteousness was in response to an ostentatious funeral parade that had been held a few months before in memory of Felix Mitchell, a notorious drug lord who had been murdered in prison.[88]

The Police Department, responding to complaints from the neighborhoods, devised a strategy to fight the drug trafficking. In 1984 an anti-drug unit of 11 officers was formed to drive the drug dealing element out of the parks and recreation centers. This special unit also patrolled hotspot areas where drug dealing was prevalent. Within six months the anti-drug unit had made 952 arrests and had reduced the level of street corner drug peddling.[89]

Mayor Lionel Wilson has responded to complaints about

the drug problem. In December, 1984 Mayor Wilson organized the Oakland Interagency Council on Drugs, an 11 member anti-drug task force of local, state, and federal law enforcement officers. This panel meets on a monthly basis to study the problem of illegal drug trafficking, to formulate policy, and to coordinate the efforts of drug enforcement agencies. In 1987 Mayor Wilson made the following statement:

> Drugs are a major problem in our city, as we know, and we must intensify the battle to beat the drug dealers and win the war--and it has become a war.[90]

Some contend that Oakland's war against drugs is a waste of manpower and money. They argue that the sale of heroin and cocaine should be legalized, which would eliminate the profit motive and reduce drug related crime and violence. The funds to fight drug abuse could be used for more constructive purposes, such as more jobs and more housing.

Churches

Many of the Black institutions, clubs, societies, and lodges that prospered in the inter-war period disappeared or declined in importance after World War 11. The Old Folk's Home closed in 1938. The Black Y.W.C.A. and the Black Y.M.C.A. integrated in the 1940s and lost their original commitment to the Black community. Many Black women's clubs and Black lodges became inactive after 1940, and those that survived

due to an decrease in membership or change of direction, no longer performed their traditional functions.

The disappearence and decline of Black institutions, lodges, clubs, and societies during the post-war period represented a breakdown of the old order. Black churches, the remaining strong institutions, were left to cope with the problems of post-war Black society.

The proliferation of Black churches that occurred during the period from 1890 to 1940 continued into the World War 11 era and afterwards. By 1942 there were 35 Black churches in Oakland, the majority of them small storefront churches.[91] Many of the storefront churches were founded by newly arrived Black migrants from the Southwestern states of Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas.

These churches performed a vital function during the World War 11 period of social upheaval. Local churches provided newcomers with information about employment opportunities and housing. Ministers served as counselors, offering advice on various matters, including financial and legal questions. Ministers assisted newcomers in other ways, such as helping them fill out housing and job applications.[92]

Not everyone considered the large number of Black Churches to be an asset to the Black community. According

to a 1942 report, "the energy expended in raising money to meet obligations leaves the (church) members little time to consider community problems." Attempts to organize the numerous Black clergymen met with little success due to "petty jealousies and denominational loyalties."[93]

The population center of Black Oakland has shifted from west to east in the decades after World War II, and several major churches have emerged in the area east of Lake Merritt. One of these churches, the Allen Temple Baptist Church, has received considerable publicity and recognition because of its involvement in the problems of the East Oakland Black community. This church has become a model for Black urban churches that are trying to improve conditions in an era of high unemployment, drug addiction, and poverty.

Allen Temple Baptist Church, organized in 1919 as the 85th Avenue Baptist Church, adopted the name of its first pastor, J. L. Allen.[94] Allen Temple Baptist Church had been in existence for over half a century when Rev. J. Alfred Smith became pastor in 1970. Under the leadership of Rev. Smith, the Allen Temple Baptist Church has sponsored programs that have had a decisive impact on the East Oakland Black community.

As a former elementary school principal and a member of the Board of Directors of the Oakland Public Schools, Rev. Smith has placed special emphasis on promoting education. Allen Temple Baptist Church supports a tutorial program for elementary, junior, and high school students. The church also sponsors a scholarship program that raises funds for students attending college.[95]

During Rev. Smith's pastorate, the Allen Temple Baptist Church initiated a program to provide housing for the elderly. In 1972 Rev. Smith formed a nonprofit housing corporation which secured funding from the California Housing Finance Agency to build a retirement home for senior citizens. The 75 unit senior citizen apartment complex, named Allen Temple Arms, was completed in 1981. This facility has a lounge, dining room, library, and a hobby room.[96]

In addition to the above programs the church operates a credit union, a counseling program, a blood bank, and a meal program for senior citizens.[97]

Membership in the Allen Temple Baptist Church has experienced phenomenal growth over the past several years, and the congregation now includes members from all over the Bay Area. In 1981 the Allen Temple Baptist Church built a new 16,000 square foot chapel at 85th Avenue and A Street. The church presently has about 3,000 members.[98]

Aside from his many projects, Rev. J. Alfred Smith has a special interest in studying the origin of the Black church in Oakland and the early Black pioneers of the East Bay.[99]

Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, the second largest Black church in East Oakland with a membership of over 3,000, is located near 69th Street and East 14th Street. Rev. Herbert Guice, Pastor of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, has commented on why the Black church endures as the central institution in Oakland's Black community.

> For years the church has been the nucleus of our community. The church is the only institution in the black community that an individual feels he owns, that he is a part of and controls. Where else in the black community can a person be diggin' a ditch all week, or scrubbin' floors, or cleaning bedpans, and then on Sunday morning dress up and be a deacon or deaconess, or lead a song, or teach a lesson, or be the president or superintendent? Where else?' The church is the one place where we can say, "This is mine.' Nothing ever transpires in this church without consent of the membership. Even if it isn't made in their favor, they had a chance to vote on it, to say yes or to say no. Where else can you find that in the community for the black person?100

The exact number of Black churches that presently exist in Oakland is not known, but one estimate suggests that there are at least 120. According to a 1987 survey, there are a total of 57 storefront churches on only three major streets -- East 14th Street, Foothill Blvd., and

MacArthur Blvd.[101] The majority of Oakland's Black churches seem to be Baptist. Like Allen Temple Baptist Church, many larger churches in Black Oakland have developed programs to address the problems of the Black community.

Education

From 1940 to 1960 the Black population of Oakland jumped from 8,500 to about 83,600, an increase of almost 1,000 percent. This large increase in the Black population created a serious racial imbalance in many of the public schools. The problem of de facto segregation became a major issue in the 1960s and has remained an issue ever since.

The West Oakland public schools were mostly Black by the late 1940s. A racial breakdown of the student body of McClymonds High School over a ten year period reflects this transition. In 1938 the McClymonds student body was composed of 648 whites and 115 Blacks. By 1944 Black students had become a majority, outnumbering whites 593 to 493. In 1948 only 50 whites remained in the school, while the number of Black students had increased to 797.[102]

Oakland's Black population spread north and east during the 1950s and by the 1960s many schools in the flatlands area had become largely Black.[103] Meanwhile, the

schools in the hill region remained predominately white. Local Black activists and progressive educators considered the racial imbalance of the Oakland schools a serious problem. The 1960s movement to integrate the Oakland schools should be considered a civil rights struggle that expressed itself on an educational level.

Skyline High School became the focal point in the controversy over segregated schools. When Skyline High School opened in 1961 the student body was 99 percent white.[104] Located in the hills on Skyline Blvd., Skyline High School was in a district that had been gerrymandered to include only the affluent hill area.

In 1962 the N.A.A.C.P. and the Congress of Racial Equality demanded that the Skyline boundaries be changed so that Black students from the lowlands could attend the school.[105] In 1964 the Oakland Board of Education, while refusing to change the boundaries, approved of a plan that permitted a small number of junior high school students who lived outside the district to attend Skyline High.[106] Many Black students took advantage of this open enrollment plan, and Skyline's all-white era came to an end.

During the 1970s a large number of Blacks moved into the hill region and by 1985 the Skyline student body contained an equal number of Black and white students.[107]

The integration of Skyline High can be considered a success, but other Oakland high schools remained largely Black. Efforts to change the boundaries of Skyline High to include students from the flatlands continued in the 1980s.

By 1985 Blacks composed almost 64 percent of Oakland's student population, while other ethnic groups--Hispanic (11%), Asian (14%), and whites (11%)--constitute a much smaller percentage. Since the enrollment of white students has declined, integration as an issue has receded into the background. Black enrollment in the Oakland schools seems to have stabilized, while the number of Asian students is expected to increase in the future.[108]

The quality of education in the Oakland Public Schools has emerged as a primary issue in the 1980s. A 1985 report, conducted by a team of U.C. Berkeley experts, identified numerous defects in the Oakland Public School system. The report revealed that

> ...there are deepseated problems, and their effects are apparent in substandard academic achievement, inadequate student preparation for college and work, and growing use of non-public schools....parents of public school students cite a lack of discipline, poor teaching, drug use, violence, and apathetic parents as major problems in the schools.[109]

The Oakland Unified School District, with the support of the community, is working to correct these deficiencies.

During the 1970s, two Blacks, Marcus Foster and Ruth Love, held the position of Superintendent, the first Blacks to serve in this capacity. In 1970 Marcus Foster was appointed Superintendent of the Oakland Unified School District, the first Black to hold this position in any major U.S. city. At the time the Oakland Public School system was experiencing financial problems, student unrest, and a serious lack of voter confidence. Not everyone in the Black community supported Foster's appointment. A group of local Black activists, known as the Oakland Black Caucus, expressed the fear that Foster would be controlled by the white board.[110]

Soon after his appointment, Superintendent Foster initiated a program to decentralize the bureaucracy, encourage community involvement, and redistribute resources to minority schools. Foster hoped that these innovations would result in a more efficient organizational structure and, eventually, the improvement of student performance. Foster practiced an open style of leadership that made him accessible to both the staff and the public.[111]

Superintendent Foster won the support of the community, and in 1973 the board offered him a new four year contract which he signed. Unfortunately, a tragic event occurred which ended his career and his life.

On November 6, 1973 Marcus Foster was assasinated by

the S.L.A., the "Symbionese Liberation Army," a guerella gang of urban malcontents. In a letter mailed to a radio station the S.L.A. claimed that they had killed Foster because he supported a plan that would require high school students to carry identification cards. Following the assasination, one school board member remarked, "This is the greatest loss the City of Oakland has ever known."[112]

For 23 months after the death of Marcus Foster the position of superintendent remained vacant. Finally in September, 1975 Dr. Ruth Love was appointed Superintendent of the Oakland Unified School District, at the time the only woman in California to hold this office.[113] A graduate of San Jose State University, Ruth Love began her education career in 1954 as an Oakland elementary school teacher.[114] She later received her M.A. and Ph.D and was appointed Director of the U.S. Office of Education's Right to Read Program. As Oakland's school Superintendent Dr. Love formulated a program to improve student performance, update the curriculum, and to streamline the administration.[115] Dr. Love resigned in 1981.

Community Colleges

For over three decades Oakland's community colleges have performed an important role in educating and training

Black students.

Oakland's community college system, established as Oakland Junior College in 1953, originally had two campuses--Merritt College on Grove Street and Laney Campus on Third Avenue and East Tenth Street. Over the years Oakland Junior College developed into a much larger system of community colleges. A new East Bay community college district called the Peralta College District was created in 1963. As a result of a 47 million dollar bond issue passed in 1965, several more community colleges came into existence, including the College of Alameda, Vista College in Berkeley, a new Laney campus, a new Merritt campus, and the East Bay Skills Center on the Oakland-Berkeley line.[116]

Two of the community colleges located in Oakland, Merritt College, a liberal arts college, and the East Bay Skills Center, a vocational school, were located in predominately Black neighborhoods, providing minority students with the opportunity to receive tuition-free education and training. Although the local Black community supported both institutions, they were closed down due to a shortage of funds.

Merritt College on Grove Street in North Oakland became a hotbed of Black political activity in the 1960s, as students responded to the civil rights struggle that occurred

on the national scene. Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, founders of the Black Panther Party, attended Merritt College in the early 1960s where they became involved in Black activist groups. Seal and Newton assisted in a student effort to force the hiring of more Black instructors.[117] The Black Panther Party, organized in 1966, established the original party headquarters at 5624 Grove Street, only a short distance away from Merritt College.

In the late 1960s Black and Chicano students periodically held demonstrations at Merritt campus, demanding, among other things, free textbooks, a non-profit cafeteria, and the hiring of "third world" employees and instructors. President Norvel Smith, a Black educator, sided with the students on many issues, but the protests continued.[118] The Black Student Alliance, a coalition of Black Student Unions from several Peralta campuses, worked to maintain the viability of the Merritt campus by protesting budget cutbacks. Another positive development that came out of Black protest movement on the Merritt campus was the creation of a strong Black Studies Program.

Merritt College survived the student protest movement of the 1960s, but found itself fighting for survival in the early 1970s. A new Merritt campus, the result of a bond issue passed in 1965, was built in the Oakland hills

which opened in 1971. The Peralta District planned to phase out the old Merritt campus on Grove Street with the expectation that flatland students would commute to the new facility.

The Black community did not approve of this plan because the new Merritt campus was far removed from the Black neighborhoods of West Oakland and North Oakland. Black community representatives proposed that a flatlands college be built that would replace the obsolete Grove Street facility and attract students from the North Oakland-Berkeley-Albany area. In 1970 the Peralta Board, having been pressured by Black activists, supported the concept of a flatlands college, but the project never materialized due to a lack of funds.[119]

After the opening of the new Merritt campus in 1971, the old Merritt campus, its name changed first to Grove Street Campus and then to North Peralta campus, continued to operate but declined as an institution. In 1971 the main campus building, a Mission-style ediface built in 1923, had to be shut down, having been condemned by a new earthquake law. After 1971 students had to attend classes in makeshift portables. Cutbacks in funding forced the layoff of instructors, and the student population dropped precipitously.

Despite protests from students, faculty, and the local Black community, the Peralta Board closed the Grove Street campus in 1974. Efforts to restore the old main building and develop the Grove Street property into a commercial enterprise have so far met with failure.[120]

Another Peralta College, the East Bay Skills Center, suffered a fate similar to the old Grove Street campus. The East Bay Skills Center, located on the Oakland-Berkeley line at 67th Street and San Pablo, was established in 1966. This huge 200,000 square foot facility provided job training programs for minorities, unemployed youth, the poor, and laid-off workers. Administered by Merritt College, the East Bay Skills Center operated as part of the Peralta system of community colleges. The East Bay Skills Center received funding from various sources, including the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), grants, and the Peralta District.

When properly funded and operating at full capacity, the East Bay Skills Center had 2,500 students and a budget of almost 4 million. The school offered classes in refrigeration, welding, business machines, electronics, word processing, banking, machine shop, and high-tech training in robotics and computer repairs. Graduates of the East Bay Skills Center had an enviable placement rate of between

80 and 90 percent. The institution had considerable success in part due to a policy which enabled students to enter and leave anytime during the school year.[121]

Despite its success as a job-training institution, the East Bay Skills Center did not survive the Deukmejian-Reagan era of Republican austerity. The Reagan administration phased out CETA funding in the 1980s, and the Peralta District could not make up the deficit. In 1983 Governor Deukmejian vetoed a bill passed by the State Legislature that would have provided State funding.[122] Treated as a "bastard child" by the Peralta District, the East Bay Skills Center (by this time the name had been changed to the Edith Austin Skills Center) operated at only 20 percent capacity in 1984 due to up and down funding. In June, 1987 the Peralta Community College Board of Trustees voted to shut down the Skills Center, and the institution, having been in existence for over 20 years, closed its doors.[123]

The shutting down of the Edith Austin Skills Center will undoubtedly have a negative effect on Black employment in the East Bay. Without the opportunity of acquiring vocational training, Black youngsters will find it difficult to find work in today's job market.

The surviving East Bay Peralta District Colleges--Merritt, Laney, Alameda, and Vista--attract an ethnically

diverse student body. For example, in 1986 the Laney College student body consisted of 60 percent minority students. However, the future of the remaining Peralta District Colleges are in doubt because of a decline in enrollment and continuing funding problems.

For the last several years Blacks have been involved in the operation of the Peralta District as administrators and board members. In 1980 Donald Godbold became Chancellor of the Peralta Community College District, the first Black to hold this position.[124] During his administration, the Peralta Colleges experienced a serious drop in enrollment (40,000 to 27,000) and a lingering deficit problem. In 1987 a newly elected board forced Godbold to resign, having charged him with mismanagement. Godbold's supporters considered his dismissal to be racially motivated.[125]

Politics

During the post-war period, Blacks struggled to participate in City government. The power of the white establishment, however, frustrated this effort and made it difficult for Blacks to be elected to City office.

For over 100 years after the founding of Oakland in 1852 an elite group of white males controlled the City government, a tradition that continued into the 1960s.[126]

During the 1950s and 1960s the Oakland Tribune, the business establishment, and real estate interests dominated the City Council.

The City Council had become in effect a self-perpetuating body. City Council members made a practice of retiring before their term of office had expired. The Mayor and the City Council would then appoint hand-picked cronies to take their place. The new members could then run as encumbants which greatly enhanced their chances of being elected.[127] This practice subverted the Democratic process, created voter apathy, and discouraged minority and labor candidates from participating in local politics.

For several decades the Oakland Tribune, a conservative Republican newspaper owned by the Knowland family, exercised considerable influence over Oakland politics. After the demise of the Post Enquirer in 1953, the Tribune emerged as the only major newspaper in Oakland.[128] William Knowland, having served as U.S. Senator (Republican) from 1944 to 1958, took over the paper in 1959. Knowland's control over the local Republican machine and the media made it difficult for candidates to be elected to City office without his support.

Oakland's political system, dominated by the Knowland family and the Republican Party, refused to respond to the demands of the Black community. Unable to participate in

City politics, militant Blacks began to join radical political groups.

Oakland's Black community in the 1940s was divided into two classes--the original residents who enjoyed a degree of prosperity and the relatively poor migrants who arrived during the war years. Jessica Mitford in her autobiography mentions this division.

> The Black population of the East Bay was sharply divided between the old inhabitants, many of whose families had lived and to some extent prospered there for generations, and newcomers from the South, who had flocked in with the advent of World War 11 seeking jobs in war industries.[129]

Black politics in the late 1940s reflected this division. The old-time residents supported the N.A.A.C.P., while the new arrivals tended to be more militant. By this time the Northern California N.A.A.C.P. had declined in influence and membership and no longer possed the fighting spirit of an earlier era. According to Jessica Mitford:

> But in Oakland the NAACP was a small and on the whole do-nothing organization...It was dominated by the old inhabitants of the black community who had attained a degree of prosperity, and having worked out a modus vivendi with the whites, resented and looked down on the clamorous hordes of recent black immigrants.[130]

Many of the new arrivals joined the East Bay Civil Rights Congress, a radical left-wing organization. Organized in 1946 by white Communists as a national party, the East Bay

chapter soon became dominated by Black militants.[131]

Under the leadership of Black executive director Hursel Alexander, the East Bay CRC fought for the civil liberties of Blacks, Communists, and left-wing radicals. At one time the East Bay chapter had 500 active members, including Black militants, white liberals, and ghetto ministers.[132] The East Bay CRC investigated charges of police brutality in the Black community and fought to integrate white neighborhoods.

After experiencing a period of success in the late 1940s, the East Bay CRC declined in membership and influence during the early 1950s. Because of its connection with the Communist Party, CRC activities received unfavorable publicity in the press which alienated the white liberal community. In the McCarthy era of fanatical anti-communism the CRC found it increasingly difficult to conduct business. At one time the leadership considered going underground in order to survive. The House Committee on Un-American Activities and the F.B.I. conducted a drive to smash the CRC on a national level. Harassed beyond endurance, the party disbanded in 1956.[133]

Immediately following World War 11, labor became involved in local politics, a movement in which Blacks participated. In 1946 a local union, the Eastbay Retail Clerks,

tried to organize the clerks in Kahn's Department Store. The police, who supported the anti-union position of management, forcefully removed the pickets. In retaliation against police interference a labor coalition called for a general strike. The general strike began on Tuesday, December 3, 1946 and lasted for two days. An estimated 142 AFL-CIO unions and 100,000 union members participated in the strike.[134]

The Mayor and the City Council came out publicly against the general strike which stirred up the ire of organized labor. In response to City government's anti-labor stance, a labor coalition formed which sponsored five pro-labor candidates to run for the next City Council election. Representatives of Black labor became involved in the campaign, and they entered a large float in an election parade. The float depicted Oakland voters attacking the Tribune Tower, the symbol of Republican power. A description of the float reads as follows:

> AFL and CIO pallbearers lowering a casket labeled The Machine into the ground, while it portrayed the gloved fists of Oakland voters knocking the Tribune Tower in half. The slogan on the float read simply: "Let's finish the job--take the power out of the Tower."[135]

As a result of this campaign four labor candidates were elected to the City Council in 1947. In recognition of the

support of the Black electorate, one of the pro-labor councilmen, Vernon Lantz, drafted an ordinance which established a Fair Employment Practice Commission.[136] Conservative members, who held a majority of five on the City Council, defeated the measure, and affirmative action had to wait several more years. Outvoted by the pro-business majority, the pro-labor members of the City Council could not change the status quo. By 1951 all of the pro-labor council members had been defeated, and the labor revolt came to an end.[137]

In 1948 labor also became involved in an effort to elect a Black man to the State Assembly. In the 1940s the C.I.O. supported civil rights issues in order to recruit Blacks into the union. C.I.O. leaders created the United Negro Labor Committee to organize the Black vote in West Oakland and North Oakland. Byron Rumford benefited from C.I.O. organizing efforts when he was elected to the Assembly in 1948, the first Black man in Northern California to hold this office. Rumford represented the Seventeenth Assembly District, which included North and West Oakland.[138]

The election of Byron Rumford to the State Assembly proved to be of major importance to Black Californians. In 1959 Assemblyman Rumford introduced a bill that established the Fair Employment Practices Commission and discrimination

in employment on the basis of race became illegal. Rumford also sponsored the Fair Housing Act which became law in 1963. Byron Rumford fought in support of other civil rights issues and served in the Assembly until 1966.[139]

During the 1960s and 1970s, Oakland's Black political leaders spearheaded a drive to enter the system on both a political and economic level. Blacks first participated in City government through their involvement in Federal Government programs such as the War on Poverty and Urban Renewal. Eventually, Black leaders took over these programs and used them as a power base for political and economic action.

Blacks also organized outside the City government in order to promote the interests of the Black community and to sponsor Black candidates for elections. The Black Caucus emerged in the 1960s as an organization of Black leaders representing local Black organizations. The Black Panthers organized in the 1960s as a paramilitary-political group of Black militants who were opposed to police brutality.

Organized in 1967, the West Oakland Planning Council (WOPC) functioned as a congress that represented all of the Black organizations in the West Oakland community, a total of 165 groups. The WOPC approached the City Council and demanded control over the Model Cities program, a West Oakland redevelopment project.[140]

The 1960s proved to be a pivotal decade in terms of Black participation in Oakland politics. In 1964 the U.S. Congress passed the Equal Opportunity Act as part of the War on Poverty. The EOA specified that the poor people served by the program should participate in the program. In Oakland the committee controlling the EOA program was called the Oakland Economic Development Council (OEDC).

The OEDC established four neighborhood advisory committees (called Target Area Advisory Committees) to act in an advisory capacity. Blacks who served on the advisory Committees demanded that receive membership on OEDC, which at the time was dominated by business interests. A struggle for control developed, and by 1967 neighborhood advisors held a majority of votes on OEDC.[141]

The new Black controlled OEDC, reflecting the concerns of the Black community, adopted a resolution in support of a police review board. The City Council rejected the proposal. In response OEDC severed its ties with the City and incorporated an an independent agency called the Oakland Economic Development Council, Inc. (OEDCI). The OEDCI appointed a new director, Black activist Percy Moore, and successfully administered the poverty program.[142] The Black community had gained control over a major government program (by 1970 OEDC and OEDCI had spent $25,000,000) and

at the same time acquired a power base for future political action.

The Citizens Committee for the Urban Renewal of Oakland (OCCUR) is another City agency that went from white to Black control. Organized in 1954, OCCUR was originally a white committee of businessmen and developers who were interested in promoting urban renewal projects. OCCUR later administered urban renewal projects for the City, but the committee remained in control of a white elite. In 1969 the Black Caucus complained that OCCUR did not represent the minority community; a HUD official agreed, which resulted in the reorganization of OCCUR with Black representation on the board.[143]

In 1971 the City Council authorized OCCUR to function as Oakland's "official citizens participation organization." Following reorganization, OCCUR pursued a program that reflected the concerns of minority residents. In 1975 Black activist Paul Cobb was appointed executive director of OCCUR. Under his leadership OCCUR pushed for affirmative action in the City's work force, minority participation in construction projects, and minority representation on the Port of Oakland board.[144]

There were other developments in the 1960s that

enabled Blacks to enter City government in greater numbers. In 1964 Republican Mayor John Houlihan appointed Joshua Rose to the City Council, the first Black to hold this office. While on the City Council Rose worked to reduce racial tensions and to eliminate discrimination in employment and education.[145] Re-elected in 1965, 1969, and 1973, Joshua Rose served on the City Council until 1977, a period of 13 years.

By 1969 Blacks held a majority of positions on the Citizens Advisory Committee on Housing, the first time in history that Blacks held a majority on a City agency. This committee studied Oakland's housing problems and submitted recommendations to the City Council.[146] Blacks also held positions on other City agencies. Judge Lionel Wilson served as Chairman of the Oakland Economic Development Council, and Norvell Smith was appointed Director of Human Resources.

The emergence of the Black Caucus in the 1960s was an indication that Blacks were organizing for political action. Composed of leaders from several Black organizations, including the N.A.A.C.P., C.O.R.E., Urban League, and various neighborhood groups, the Black Caucus made a significant impact on local politics.[147] The Black Caucus received representation on the Model Cities Policy Committee, a

West Oakland neighborhood redevelopment group. In 1969 the Black Caucus succeeded in forcing the reorganization of OCCUR so it would be representative of the neighborhoods it served. The Black Caucus provided a political base for Ronald Dellums when he was elected Congressman of the 7th (now 8th) Congressional District in 1970, a district that includes Berkeley and part of Oakland.[148] Dellums, a progressive Democrat, has been re-elected several times and still represents this district.

Black Panthers

The fact that a few Blacks held important positions in City government did not bring an end to the discontent that existed in the Black community. There were many danger signals in the 1960s suggesting that Black Oakland was ready to explode. By 1966 unemployment in Black Oakland had reached five times the national average. A housing crisis developed in the 1960s due to the shortage of inexpensive housing; the Acorn project by this time had destroyed acres of low-cost homes and apartments. After the Watts riot in 1965 many predicted that the Oakland ghetto was ready to boil over.[149]

Police brutality continued to be a major issue in the Black community during the 1960s. From 1965 to 1966 there

were approximately 25 demonstrations in Oakland protesting police violence. In 1966 local civil rights groups and neighborhood groups organized ACTION, a committee that advocated the creation of a civilian review board.[150] The Police Department and the City Council, however, remained opposed to the concept of a civilian review board. The Black community also complained about the lack of Black representation on the Oakland Police force. In 1966 there were only 19 Blacks on the 600 member police force, about 3 percent of the total.[151]

The rise of the Black Panther Party in the 1960s can be attributed to the deep frustration found in the Oakland ghetto because of the feeling that "nobody listens, nobody cares." The Black Panther Party was organized in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, both students at Merritt College. A party dedicated to revolution, the Black Panthers carried weapons and functioned as an armed patrol to protect Blacks against the threat of police violence. The Black Panthers drafted a Ten-Point Program that demanded the following for Black people: freedom, full employment, decent housing, education, an end to police brutality, trial by peers, exemption from military service, and "an end to the robbery by the Capitalist."[152] Eldridge Cleaver, author of Soul on Ice, joined the organization in

1967 and founded the Black Panther newspaper.

The Black Panthers originally functioned as a paramilitary organization that emphasized military discipline and self-defense. Because of their display of weapons and angry rhetoric, they received considerable publicity. In 1967 a contingent of Black Panthers armed with weapons marched on the State Capitol and entered the Assembly chamber in protest of a gun control law, an incident that made headlines all over the state. In 1967 Huey Newton was involved in a shootout with an Oakland policeman, John Frey, and convicted of manslaughter. In 1968 several Black Panthers engaged in a gun battle with the Oakland Police which left one Panther, Bobby James Hutton, a teenager, dead.[153] In 1968 11 Black Panthers died across the country as a result of gun clashes with the police.

By the 1970s the Black Panther Party, in an effort to improve its image, had changed tactics. The gun-barrel approach to politics was de-emphasized. To show its commitment to the Black community, the party organized numerous social programs, many of which were funded by government grants. The Oakland Black Panthers initiated a program that provided free breakfasts for poor children. They also started the Oakland Community School, a school for children

with learning disabilities. They set up a free medical clinic, free legal clinic, and a program for juvenile delinquents.[154]

In the 1970s the Black Panthers, in an attempt to organize the community, became involved in local politics. Because of legal problems, Eldridge Cleaver and Huey Newton retreated into exile, and Elaine Brown took control of the party. In 1973 and 1975 Elaine Brown became a candidate for the Oakland City Council. In 1973 Bobby Seale ran for the office of Mayor. Although Seale and Brown were unsuccessful as candidates, they waged sophisticated campaigns and proved that the party had considerable political support. The Panthers campaigned for John George in 1976 when he was elected Alameda County's first Black supervisor. Later in 1977 the Panthers campaigned for Lionel Wilson when he ran for Mayor.[155] The Black Panthers declined as a political force in the late 1970s. With the election of Wilson as Mayor of Oakland and the election of Blacks to the City Council, the era of radical Black politics came to an end.

Lionel Wilson

The 30 year era of Republican mayors came to an end in 1977 when Democrat Lionel Wilson, a former judge, was elected the first Black Mayor of Oakland. Mayor Wilson's

career had prepared him for this office.

Originally from New Orleans, Lionel Wilson moved to Oakland with his family while he was a young boy. Wilson graduated from McClymonds High School. He attended U.C. Berkeley, receiving a B.A. degree in economics in 1939. In 1949 Wilson received J.D. degree from Hastings College of Law. Lionel Wilson entered law practice in Oakland. In 1960 Governor Edmund Brown, Sr. appointed Wilson to the Oakland-Piedmont Municipal Court, and he became Alameda County's first Black judge. Wilson later served as president of Oakland's Economic Development Council, Inc. and as chairman of the Anti-Poverty Board. Wilson also joined the Oakland N.A.A.C.P. and served on the Board of Directors.[156]

As Mayor, Wilson started a quiet revolution, and a new, dynamic Black leadership emerged in City government. By 1980 several Blacks held prominent positions as board members and city officials, including Ruth Love, Superintendent of Schools, Calvin Simmons, Conductor of the Oakland Symphony, Jeffrey Tucker, General Manager of the Oakland Ballet, and Thomas L. Berkley, President of the Oakland Board of Port Commissioners.[157] In 1981 Henry Gardner became the first Black to hold the position of City Manager, and in 1982 Julian Euell became the first Black Director

of the Oakland Museum.

The 9 member City Council, for many years an all-white preserve, also relected the growing Black involvement in City government. In the late 1970s two Blacks, Carter Gilmore in 1977 and Wilson Riles in 1979, were elected to the City Council. In 1980 the City of Oakland went back to district elections and in 1983 two more Blacks, Leo Bazile and Aleta Cannon, were elected to the City Council, giving Blacks a majority on the City Council for the first time in the City's history.[158]

The success of Black candidates in local elections was largely due to a change in demographics. By 1980 Blacks comprised the largest racial group in Oakland, 159,281 or 45.9 percent of the total population, while the white population by this time had dropped to 129,692, or 38.2 percent of the total population.

Mayor Wilson has been re-elected twice, but his policies over the last 10 years have disappointed Black citizens who consider themselves to be progressive. Wilson has supported downtown development while, some have said, the neighborhoods have been allowed to deteriorate. In April, 1985 Black City Councilman Wilson Riles ran against Lionel Wilson in the Mayoral election. Riles has been a strong advocate of rent control which Mayor Wilson opposes.

Although Riles lost the election, his campaign is an indication that the Black electorate continues to be fragmented.[159]

Meanwhile, the left-wing remains a viable force in Black Oakland politics. The African Peoples Socialist Party operates Uhuru House at 7911 MacArthur Blvd. which offers various services to the Black community, including a free health care training program. The party publishes a newspaper called the Burning Spear which advocates economic freedom and community control. The African Peoples Socialist Party has a special concern for the homeless, and in the past they have seized abandoned houses in East Oakland in order to provide shelter for the homeless.[160]

Business

Following the election of Mayor Wilson, the City Council considered proposals to assist the minority business community of Oakland. In 1979 the City Council approved a plan to help minority firms gain a larger share of the $6 million dollars a year the City spent for equipment and supplies. This plan revised the bidding system so that Oakland minority businesses received a 5 percent preference on bids over $5,000. Within a period of three years minority vendors increased their share of City purchases from 6 percent in 1979 to 22 percent in 1981.[161]

In 1980 Oakland's Office of Economic Development set up a program to assist minority entrepreneurs. The purpose of this program was to locate healthy businesses interested in selling and then match them with minority businessmen who were interested in buying. The OED enables minorities to acquire successful businesses so that the risks involved are minimized.[162]

In 1980 the City Council approved of an Economic Development Program that presented strategies and options to enhance minority equity participation in Oakland's many development projects. Mayor Wilson has also promoted the concept of minority equity so that Blacks and other minorities benefit from Oakland's development. Because of this policy, Blacks have formed local corporations and invested in several major projects, including Acorn Shopping Center, the City Center project, Oakland Hyatt Regency Hotel, and the Coliseum Business Park project.[163] One project, the Storek and Storek office building, was not approved because of insufficient minority participation.

The Port of Oakland and the Oakland Unified School District have also developed programs to encourage minority participation in contracts. In 1979 the school district began to actively solicit minority firms so that "minority owned business enterprises have an equal opportunity to do

business with the district." An affirmative action purchasing manager was hired to implement this policy which stated that 25 percent of all school purchases should be from minority firms.[164] In 1980 the Port of Oakland Commissioners voted to raise the number of port contracts conducted by minority subcontractors, setting a goal of 26 percent minority participation.[165]

Many Black businesses are receiving assistance from federal and local government agencies which provide minority businessmen with financing and professional advice. One of these agencies, the Oakland Black Development Corp., recently funnelled $500,000 in City financed loans to minority entrepreneurs.[166]

As a result of these efforts to encourage Black enterprise, the number of Black businesses in Oakland, according to the census, has increased from 1977 to 1982 by 47 percent. In 1982 there were 5,049 Black owned businesses in Alameda County and 3,633 in Oakland. In 1982 Oakland's Black business community grossed $181.2 million.[167]

Progress has been made and changes have occurred in the East Bay Black Business community since World War 11. Black businesses, however, still exist in contemporary Oakland that resemble the old Black businesses of early Oakland.

In the early 1850s William Rich opened a restaurant at the foot of Broadway, Oakland's first Black-owned restaurant, which featured clam chowder. In 1974, 120 years later, Ms. T. J. Robinson, displaying the same entrepreneural spirit, purchased a dilapidated building at the corner of 5th and Brush Streets, only a few blocks away from the restaurant of William Rich. Although her friends called the building a "shack," the rehabilitated structure became T. J.'s Gingerbread House, a business that sold tea and gingerbread cookies.

T. J.'s Gingerbread House, which has been designed to resemble the gingerbread house in the fairy story, has expanded and now the operation includes a restaurant that features Cajun Creole cuisine. The business also sells dolls, souvenirs, and baked goods. Grossing over $500,000 a year, T. J.'s Gingerbread House has a reputation that is known around the world.[168] William Rich would be proud of T. J.'s Gingerbread House, although it does not sell clam chowder and dinner is by reservation only.

In 1862 John Peterson and his wife Hettie, early Oakland Black pioneers, started a catering business in their house at the corner of Franklin and Seventh Streets. In 1975, 113 years later, another Black couple, Arthur Scott and his wife Frazier, established KASS Management Services,

a business that specialized in catering. The business originally catered food for day care centers, but the operation expanded and now an Air Force Base is a major customer.

KASS presently has 310 employees and a 5,000 square foot kitchen in Oakland. The business has the capability of catering up to 2,500 people. KASS recently grossed $3,000,000 a year, and President Arthur Scott has received recognition as an "outstanding businessperson" in the Minority Business and Professional Directory.[169] The 1860s business of John Peterson, which catered to small parties, certainly did not have this capacity. KASS Management Services Inc. is located at 1807 Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Oakland.

Unlike the business of early Oakland, the modern Black business establishment is supported by a Black Chamber of Commerce. The Oakland based Northern California Black Chamber of Commerce, organized in 1977, is an affiliate of the National Association of Black and Minority Chambers of Commerce. The purpose of the Northern California Black Chamber of Commerce is to advance the interests of the Black business community and to "advance the general welfare and prosperity of the Northern California area..."[170] Since its creation 10 years ago, the NCBCC, under the leadership of President Oscar J. Coffey Jr., has been successful in

promoting Black business and in landing lucrative contracts from the City. The NCBCC now has the distinction of being the "Nation's number one Black Chamber of Commerce."

In 1980 the City of Oakland awarded a $50,000 contract to the NCBCC to attract the Black tourist and Black convention trade to Oakland. The NCBCC succeeded in booking several large conventions for the new $31.5 million Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center, which at the time was still under construction.

In 1985 the NCBCC formed a non-profit subsidiary, Chambers Centers Development Inc., which received the right to develop Preservation Park. This 2.6 acre commercial site, located west of City Center, consists of 17 old Victorian buildings that are in the process of being restored. When completed Preservation Park will have 42,000 square feet of office and restaurant space. The Preservation Park project is being financed by a grant from HUD.[171]

Newspapers

Several Black newspapers came into existence during the post-war period, expressing many political viewpoints. Three radical Black newspapers emerged, reflecting the radical politics of the era. First published in 1919, the California Voice, the only Black newspaper to survive the

depression years, still endures, Oakland's oldest Black newspaper.

Three Black newspapers, the Oakland Herald, Oakland Beacon, and the Oakland Light appeared briefly in the 1940s. The Beacon was published from 1945 to 1947 in West Oakland, originally in the basement of a house and later in a store-front on 7th Street. The Beacon supported the Democratic Party, perhaps the first Black newspaper to endorse the Democrats. Two other Black newspapers emerged in the 1940s, the Oakland Light (1944?-1945) and the Oakland Herald (1943). The California Voice survived the 1950s alone as Oakland's only Black newspaper.[172]

Three Black newspapers, the Oakland Flatlands, the Black Panther, and the Oakland Post, started publication in the 1960s. The Oakland Post began publication in 1963 at 1401 Middle Harbor Road in Oakland. The Post later moved to Berkeley (2971 Sacramento Street and 2999 Shattuck Ave.). The newspaper returned to Oakland and is currently being published at 630-20th Street.[173] The Oakland Flatlands, a militant, progressive newspaper, was published from 1966 to 1969. The Oakland Flatlands brought attention to the grievances of the Black underclass at a time when many observers thought Black Oakland was ready to explode. The Black

Panther Black Community News Service, published from 1967 to 1980, served as the mouthpiece for the Black Panther Party.

The demise of the Oakland Flatlands and the Black Panther newspaper did not bring an end to militant journalism in Oakland. The Burning Spear, the newspaper of the Africans Peoples Socialist Party, has been published in Oakland since 1981.

The career of Black journalist Robert Maynard is symbolic of the change that has occurred in Oakland in the last decade. Maynard became editor of the Oakland Tribune, Oakland's largest daily newspaper, in 1979, publisher in 1981, and finally owner in 1983 when he purchased the newspaper from the Gannett chain. Maynard is the "first black to hold any of his positions at a large metropolitan daily with a primarily white readership."[174]

Society

There have been many changes in Black Oakland over the past 40 years, but the post-World War 11 Black Oakland social order continues to function in much the same way as it did in the 1920s and 1930s. Remarkably, several Black women's clubs, many of them members of the Northern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, endured the turmoil of the World War 11 years and survived into the modern era. The

Fanny Jackson Coppin Club (1899), Women's Art & Industrial Club (1906), the Mother's Charity Club (1907), the Elmhurst Progressive Club (1912), and the Northern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs (1913) are some of the major clubs that remained active following the war years.[175]

Sororities and lodges, dating back to an earlier period, continued to maintain their membership and status in post-war Oakland. The Alpha Nu Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, organized in 1929, remains a viable organization to this day. The Black Elks, organized in 1885, had two chapters functioning in the 1950s--Athens Lodge No. 70 and Mizpah Temple No. 18. Acacia Lodge No. 7, founded in 1899, Oakland's first Black Masonic Lodge, has been successful in recruiting new members and lives today.

Not all of the clubs and societies born during the early decades of the century survived into the post-war era. Many of the social and civic clubs that flourished in the twenties and thirties became inactive after the war, as members moved out of the area, joined other clubs, or became involved in other activities.

Although some of the older clubs have disappeared, Black club activity has remained strong in Oakland to the present day. Social, civic, political, and neighborhood clubs continue to be popular. Over the last 40 years numerous Black

clubs, many with exotic names, have been organized, including the Double 7 Social Club, Essence Social Club, Fabulous Few, the 50 Sportsmen Social Club, Golden Ettiquette Social Club, Hi-Hatters Club, La Femme, Les Dix Feminas Social Club, Les Mystique Civic & Social Club, Octagons, Pas A. Pas Club, S.O.S. Club, Top Hatters Social Club, Town and Country Girls, Twenty-Twenty Club, VVIP Social Club.[176] The club movement that exists today should be seen as a continuation of the early Black club phenomenon that had its origin in the late 1890s.

Of all the clubs and organizations that have emerged in Black Oakland since World War 11, two in particular, the Links and the Black Cowboys, have received considerable recognition. Organized in 1946 in Philadelphia, the Links is a national service organization of affluent, well bred, and highly educated (all are college graduates) Black women. Local chapters have been formed in many states; the Oakland Bay Area Chapter dates back to 1948. Each chapter is a "link" in a nationwide chain of friendship.

The purpose of Links is "to develop the youth of our community along constructive lines by helping them to obtain scholarships, and encouraging them to continue their education after high school..."[177] Links members contribute to worthy Black causes, such as the N.A.A.C.P., United Negro

College Fund, sickle cell anemia research, and day care centers.

The Links periodically sponsor benefits, such as the debutante cotillion, for fund raising purposes. The debs, who are usually seniors in high school, are selected because of their family backgrounds, scholastic achievement, and personal deportment. At the cotillion the girls' names are announced and their individual accomplishments in school and in the community are itemized. The girls then curtsy in honor to their parents and perform a grand waltz in the manner of a traditional cotillion.[178] The Links Cotillion receives considerable publicity from the media and is the big event of the year in Black high society.

There is a strong movement in Oakland to preserve the Black heritage, and the Black Cowboys is a manifestation of this interest. The Black Cowboys, organized in 1975 by the Oakland Traders, a local civic group, is a relatively new association. The purpose of the Black Cowboys is to celebrate the Black cowboys and mountain men who contributed to the settlement and development of California and the West, such as Bill Pickett, Nat Love, Ben Hodges, John Swain, and James Beckworth.[179]

The annual Black Cowboy Parade, held in October, has become an East Bay tradition. Black Cowboys from all over

California ride horseback in the parade and entertain the crowds with feats of horsemanship. School bands, color guards, and floats with a Western theme, also participate in the parade which winds through the downtown streets of Oakland. In 1987 the Oakland Museum commemorated the Black cowboy tradition in a special exhibit entitled "Black Cowboys: Then and Now."[180]

Several Greek-letter societies have remained active in Black Oakland during the post-war era, including Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and Alpha Kappa Alpha, Beta Phi Zeta, Eta Phi Beta, and Iota Phi Lambda Sororities.[181] These societies, originally organized to enhance the social and intellectual life of Black college students, now sponsor service projects that contribute to the welfare of the Black community.

The Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority has the distinction of being the first Black Greek-letter society in the East Bay. Organized in 1908 at Howard University, Alpha Kappa Alpha later became a national Black sorority with chapters on the West Coast. Ida Louise Jackson, Oakland's first Black public school teacher, organized two Alpha Kappa Alpha chapters in the East Bay during the 1920s--Rho Chapter in 1923 at U.C. Berkeley and Alpha Nu Omega in 1929 with a membership from both Oakland and Berkeley.

Ida Jackson remained active in the sorority during the

1930s and served as Supreme Basileus (President) of Alpha Kappa Alpha in 1936. A native of Mississippi, Soror Jackson organized the Mississippi Health Project in 1936, a sorority sponsored program that improved health conditions in the Black population. Alpha Nu Omega has continued the tradition of community service and over the years the chapter has set up scholarship funds for deserving students and supported local institutions such as the Y.W.C.A. and the N.A.A.C.P.[182]

Culture

Several Oakland-based institutions are involved in the preservation and presentation of Black culture. Three museums in Oakland exhibit material relating to the Black experience: the Oakland museum, the East Bay Negro Historical Society, and the Ebony Museum of Art. The Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame is concerned with the contributions of Black filmmakers. The Oakland Ensemble Theatre functions as a Black cultural center, producing plays that reflect the Black experience.

The East Bay Negro Historical Society was founded on July 2, 1965 by a group of local Black citizens who were interested in the preservation and promotion of Black history. The organization gathered support and people began to donate material relating to the Black subculture. In 1970 President

Eugene Lasartemay and his wife, Ruth, opened a store front museum at 3651 Grove Street in Oakland to exhibit the items that the society had accumulated over the years. The East Bay Negro Historical Society displays artifacts and photographs that reflect Afro-American history on a local, state, and national level. The museum has greatly expanded since its origin, and it is now located in the north wing of the Golden Gate Branch Library on San Pablo Ave. in Oakland.[183]

When Oakland's new $10,000,000 museum opened in 1969, minorities complained that the contributions of California ethnic groups were not included in the exhibits. The Black Caucus demanded that minorities be represented on the staff and in the exhibits. In response to pressure from the Black Caucus and other organizations, the Oakland Museum Commission established the Guild for Cultural and Ethnic Affairs, a department that develops projects and programs for five major ethnic groups: Spanish speaking, Asian, Blacks, Native Americans, and Europeans. The Curator of this department, Benjamin W. Hazard, has received recognition for designing exhibits that depict the Black contribution to California history.[184]

In 1982 Julian T. Euell became the Director of the Oakland Museum, the first Black to hold this position in a major U.S. museum. Euell was formerly employed by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. as Assistant Secretary for

Public Service. Julian Euell remained Director of the Oakland Museum until he resigned in October, 1987.[185]

The Ebony Museum opened in 1980 at 582-14th Street in downtown Oakland, the creation of Aissatouri Ayuza Vernita. The Ebony Museum houses an unusual collection of Afro-American and African art and also exhibits the works of local artists and photographers. The museum has a special exhibit that honors the contributions of contemporary Afro-American scientists, politicians, and historians. The Ebony Museum of Art is presently located at 1034-14th Street in West Oakland.[186]

The Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame was established in 1973 by the Oakland Museum's Cultural and Ethnic Affairs Guild and since 1977 has functioned as an independent non-profit organization. The purpose of the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame is to "study, teach, and preserve the contributions of Black filmmakers to American cinema." Current activities include a film series, symposium, film premiers, international film competition, and an Annual Awards Ceremony. The Annual Awards Ceremony is held each February (Black History Month) at the Paramount Theater in Oakland. Black cinema contributors who are inducted into the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame receive the Oscar Micheaux Award, named after an early Black film producer.[187]

The Oakland Ensemble Theatre has the distinction of being the only live theatre in Oakland. The OET opened in 1974 at 660-13th Street in Preservation Park. From its inception OET has produced plays that reflect the Black experience, but the ultimate goal of OET has been to establish a Black cultural center in downtown Oakland. Progress toward this objective occurred in 1985 when OET relocated to the Alice Club Hotel at 1428 Alice Street. The City of Oakland plans to develop the Alice Club Hotel into the Alice Arts Center, a City-sponsored art center with OET as the anchor tenant. OET has the potential to be a major cultural force in the East Bay Black community.[188]

Music

For over a century Oakland has produced Black musicians who have excelled in all types of music, including classical, jazz, blues, and popular, a tradition that continues to this day.

Black Oaklanders displayed a keen interest in classical music before the turn of the century. While still a young woman, Pauline Powell achieved recognition as a gifted pianist in the 1890s, and she performed at recitals and music fests for several years.[189] Miss Irene Rutherford invented an instrument called the "Reneolin," a one string contrivance

that had no frets and was played with a bow. This instrument, constructed by her brother Gemel, was presented to the public in 1915 at a recital at Starr King Hall. Following a reading of Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poem "Ode to Etheopia" by an elocutionist, Miss Rutherfor played Beethoven's "Sonata quasi una Fantasa, Opus 27." A contemporary newspaper considered her performance on this strange instrument to be "wonderful."[190]

During the 1920s and 1930s several Oakland-based jazz bands performed in cafes and night clubs. The following bands advertised in local Black newspapers: Henry Starr and his Cafe Richards Syncopators, Clem Raymond's Jazz Hounds, Moseby's Blues Blowers, Bob Hill and his Jazz Hounds, Wade Whaley's Black and Tans, and Saunders King and the Aristocrats of Swing. During the early 1940s, Ella Fitzgerald and Earl "Fatha" Hines performed on numerous occassions at the Sweet's Ballroom on Broadway.[191]

The Black migration to West Oakland in the 1940s had an influence on the development of Black music in Oakland. Large numbers of war-time workers, flush with money, patronized the night clubs and honky-tonk cafes on 7th Street. West Oakland night clubs, such as the Manhattan, the Three Sisters, Slim Jenkins, Esther's Orbit Room, and the Rumboogie, featured live music; jazz combos, bluesmen, and big names

in Black popular music performed on a regular basis.[192]

Slim Jenkins, located at the corner of Wood and 7th Streets, the "most celebrated Black night club on the Pacific Coast," attracted an integrated clientelle. The Slim Jenkins complex consisted of a night club, restaurant, banquet room, liquor store, and market. The Black proprietor, Harold "Slim" Jenkins, an imposing man at six feet five inches tall and weighing over 200 pounds, opened his nightclub in 1933, and he remained in business at the same location for almost 30 years. Prominent Black musicians performed at Slim Jenkins, including the Ink Spots, Dinah Washington, and Earl "Fatha" Hines. Slim Jenkins continued to promote Black music until his West Oakland club closed in 1962.[193]

The blues flourished in West Oakland during the years following World War 11. Two strains of the blues became popular in the night clubs and cafes of West Oakland--the urban blues and the country blues. Many of the famous blues artists featured by West Oakland night clubs preferred to sing the urban blues in the classic style--electrified and aggressive--of Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey. Immigrants from Texas and Louisiana liked to hear the country blues, the mournful blues sung by the field hands and work gangs of the South, on juke box records or performed in the back rooms of 7th Street cafes.

The urban blues and the country blues eventually merged to form the Oakland Blues, also known as the West Coast Blues, a distinctive strain of the blues that has been played in Oakland night clubs ever since the 1940s. Although most of the night clubs on 7th Street have shut down, the Oakland Blues is still performed by Black artists at night clubs and cafes in West Oakland, North Oakland, and Berkeley.[194]

Black Oakland experienced a revival of interest in classical music when Calvin Simmons conducted the Oakland Symphony. Born in San Francisco, Calvin Simmons studied music at the San Francisco Opera and later at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. When he took charge of the Oakland Symphony in 1979, Simmons was already considered one of the leading conductors in the United States. Simmons and the orchestra often visited the Oakland schools because he firmly believed that children should be exposed to classical music.

Calvin Simmons led the Oakland Symphony for only three years. His meteoric career ended abruptly in August, 1982 when he drowned in a boating accident on a lake in New York. Following his death at the age of 32, the Oakland Symphony set up a fund in his name to support the teaching of music in the schools.[195]

Black Oakland continues to influence the music world. Oakland's Pointer Sisters have been making hit records since

the 1970s. The daughters of minister parents, the four Pointer sisters, Ruth, Anita, June, and Bonnie at one time sang in the Church of God choir. The Pointer Sisters turned professional, signed a record contract, and had their first hit record in 1973. In 1978 one of the sisters, Bonnie, went solo. The group survived this defection and continued to make records. Their latest album, "Break Out," has won two Grammys and two American Music Awards.[196]

Contemporary Black writers, poets, dancers, and artists have also contributed to the Bay Area Black cultural heritage. Their contribution suggests that the Black Oakland cultural tradition, a tradition that dates back to the 19th century, continues to flourish in the modern era.

Conclusion

The Black presence in the East Bay dates back to the 1850s. Several Black pioneers settled in Oakland soon after the City was founded in 1852. In an age of segregation they formed their own schools, churches, lodges, and clubs. Established in 1858, the A.M.E. Church, the first Black church, emerged as the dominent institution of the period. On the political front Black Oaklanders struggled to achieve basic civil rights and to eliminate laws that discriminated against minorities. Following the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, the employment situation for Blacks in Oakland improved remarkably, and the railroad soon became the major employer of the Black work force. By 1900 Black Oaklanders had reached a level of development comparable to that of Black San Francisco.

Many changes occurred during the 1900 to 1940 middle period of Black Oakland's history. This was an era of institution building as Black Oaklanders strived to forge their destiny through the process of self-determination. Several Black institutions came into existence, including the Old Folks Home, the Fannie Wall Children's Home, and the Black Y's. The middle period was an age of pluralism and diversity as numerous churches, newspapers, lodges, and clubs were established.

West Oakland, the home of the railroad yards, became the economic and cultural center of Black Oakland, and the railroad subculture remained the most distinctive feature of Black Oakland. Several Black businesses operated on 7th Street, West Oakland's main artery. A large number of Black professionals - doctors, dentists, and lawyers - set up practice in West Oakland. Most of the major Black institutions, churches, lodges, and clubs were located in West Oakland. Several Black nightclubs, such as Slim Jenkins, also operated in West Oakland.

With the advent of World War 11 the settled ways of the old order came to an end. Thousands of Blacks immigrated to the Bay Area to work in defense industries. The Black population of Oakland increased dramatically, and West Oakland became a predominately Black community. Following the war, the Black community encountered several problems, including a high rate of unemployment, a housing shortage, and a drug epidemic. Because of changing economic conditions, the railroad subculture, having endured for almost a century, disappeared.

During the 1960s and 1970s Blacks made a determined effort to participate in City government. Although this movement was resisted by the white establishment, Blacks

gained political power by seizing control of urban renewal programs. By the 1970s Blacks had become the largest racial group in Oakland which increased their political leverage. During the 1970s Blacks were elected to the City Council, and in 1977 Oakland elected its first Black mayor.

Several institutions and organizations have been established in Oakland during the modern era that are dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Black culture. The Oakland Ensemble Theatre, the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, the Black Cowboys, and the East Bay Negro Historical Society are all involved in Black cultural activities. The East Bay Negro Historical Society and the Oakland Public Library are cooperating in an effort to locate materials relating to local Black history. Oakland's Black history, a 135 year legacy, has attracted the attention of both students and scholars.

NOTES

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The Lasartemays, founders of the East Bay Negro Historical Society, Oakland Tribune, 1981

Courtesy African American Museum & Library at Oakland

Notes

Part One: 1852 - 1900

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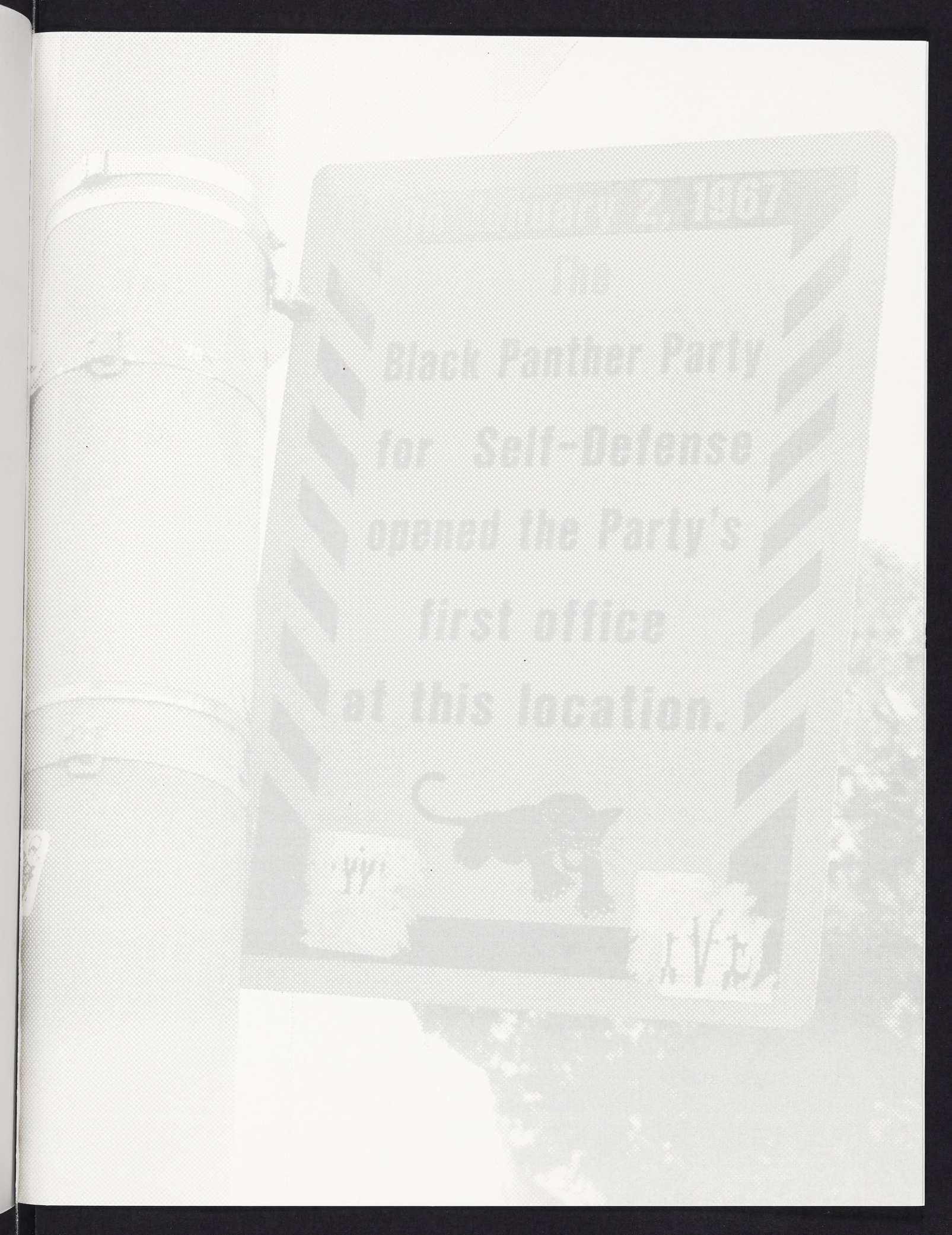
1967
Black Panther Party
for Self-Defense
opened the Party's
first office
at this location.

PHOTO PREVIOUS PAGE

Signage from the Black Panther self-guided walking tour,
5622 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, now the All Good Bakery, 2015

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Cam, Yvonne

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Ford, Marcella

Hines, William

Kennedy, Fannie

King, Glenn

Lasartemay, Eugene

Lasartemay, Ruth

Smith, Juanita

Towns, Royal

Turner, Morrie

XIII. Special Collections

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

East Bay Negro Historical Society

Oakland Public Library, History & Literature Dept.

Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room

Resources

These titles are jumping-off points for further research. The knowledgeable librarians and archivists at Oakland Public Library's Oakland History Room and the African American Museum & Library at Oakland can help you find additional information. These two treasured resources, both located in downtown Oakland, have vast collections of archival, primary source materials, including newspaper articles, journals, photos, postcards and scrapbooks.

The Golden Gate Branch Library has a special relationship with the African American Museum & Library at Oakland. In 1982, the East Bay Negro Historical Society, a citizen-led initiative, was invited to establish an African American collection in the Golden Gate Branch, the first library in Oakland to have a predominantly African American focus. Later, the organization changed its name to the Northern California Center for Afro-American History & Life. In 1994, this organization joined with the City of Oakland to create the African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO). AAMLO reopened in the former Charles S. Greene Library in 2002.

To learn more or make an appointment, visit www.oaklandlibrary.org.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM & LIBRARY AT OAKLAND

Shades of North Oakland photo collection, 1999.

The Official Black Panther Party Historical Tour Guide, Huey Newton Foundation, circa late 2000s.

Visions Toward Tomorrow, Lawrence P. Crouchett, Lonnie Bunch III, Martha Kendall Winnacker, 1989.

GOLDEN GATE BRANCH LIBRARY

Early Emeryville Remembered: Historical Essays, Emeryville Historical Society, 1996.

From Labor to Reward, Martha C. Taylor, 2016.

Temescal Legacies: Narratives of Change from a North Oakland Neighborhood, Jeff Norman, 2006.

OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY, MAIN BRANCH

Killing the Messenger, Thomas Peele, 2012.

Oakland Tribune archives, https://newspaperarchive.com/. Access at any Oakland Public Library.

Resources Continued

OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY'S OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

Emeryville Historical Society quarterly journals, 1990 – present.

Golden Gate Neighborhood clippings file.

Images of America: Emeryville, Emeryville Historical Society, 2005.

WEBSITES

East Bay Yesterday, A podcast series by local historian Liam O'Donoghue, covering many underrecognized local heroes, https://eastbayyesterday.com/.

Emeryville Historical Society, the group's online presence includes some articles from their journals, https://emeryvillehistorical.org/.

Oakland Heritage Alliance, a non-profit that connects Oakland's past to its present and future through walking tours and a newsletter, http://oaklandheritage.org/.

Oakland wiki, A crowd-sourced pool of knowledge started in 2012 about many of Oakland's people, places and events, https://localwiki.org/oakland/.

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I Must Not Forget

On Becoming A Historic Resident

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This local collection series is born from the wisdom and work of many Oakland local historians, neighbors, librarians, researchers, thinkers, creatives and writers. I am deeply grateful for their generosity in sharing their knowledge and expertise. And to you, readers and researchers, the potency of this collection lives on through your curiosity.

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About marksearch

Cultural researcher, literacy educator and artist Sue Mark, a long-time North Oakland neighbor, has a keen interest in over-looked stories. As part of the marksearch team, she designs ways for people to share their stories for empowerment and preservation. With conversation as her primary tool, she develops interactive projects that make space for social memory. Whether pushing a work cart designed as a mobile park or towing a traveling billboard by tandem bike, marksearch engages people to share personal histories that create lasting neighborhood narratives.

Since 2000, Sue has partnered with Bruce Douglas (her husband), an engineer and inventor with a passion for repurposing materials. Their practice as the marksearch team blends their diverse skills and shared life. From neighbor-led walking discussions to sidewalk conversations, commemorative plaques and murals recognizing the collective knowledge of many generations, their projects move beyond aesthetic experience. The marksearch team has implemented interdisciplinary projects with community groups, historians, urban planners and municipalities throughout Oakland and across the globe.

marksearch.org

Of 9 copies, this book is number 9

PHOTO KEY (IMAGES LEFT TO RIGHT)

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS Family photo of Benjamin Williams, founder of Williams Low-Cost Appliances, now owned by his nephew, at 6451 San Pablo Avenue 2015	**NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS** Golden Gate's business district on San Pablo Avenue, circa 1980s 2017 Courtesy Emeryville Historical Society	**FARMERS' MARKET** Phat Beets Food Justice Market & CSA on Grace Street by Destiny Arts 2014 Photo by Lorah Gross	**NEIGHBORHOOD HOME** One of the first homes in the neighborhood purchased by an African American family in the 1940s 2015 Photo by Pamela Palma	**LONG-TIME NEIGHBOR** Laura Ingram, activist & founder of SPAGGIA neighborhood group, at 'Love Our Neighborhood Day' celebration 2014 Photo by Pamela Palma
HISTORIC SITE St. Columba Church's front lawn with crosses marking annual homicides in Oakland 2014 Photo by Gene Anderson	**LONG-TIME NEIGHBOR** Robin Freeman, planner & environmentalist at Communities' Crossing, a series of neighborhood history events 2014 Photo by Pamela Palma	**NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS** Eastern City Cafe, a family-owned restaurant, 1970s-2016, on San Pablo Avenue near 59th Street 2014	Commons Archive COMMONS ARCHIVE commons archive Commons Archive Commons Archive Commons ARCHIVE Commons Archive Commons Archive	**HISTORIC SITE** Golden Gate Hotel, at Marshall Street & Stanford Avenue 1886 Courtesy Emeryville Historical Society
LONG-TIME NEIGHBOR Joanne Dickerson-Harper, whose parents were among the first African Americans in the Golden Gate (1940s) 2015 Photo by Lorah Gross	**NEIGHBORHOOD HOME** Golden Gate Italianate cottage possibly built by Charles Klinkner Circa late 1860s Courtesy Emeryville Historical Society	**HISTORIC SITE** Engraving of indigenous Ohlone in a tule boat on the San Francisco Bay 1916 Courtesy Images of America: Emeryville, Arcadia Publishing	**NEIGHBORHOOD HOMES** Golden Gate's Community Garden at 1068 62nd Street, part of Oakland's gardening program 2014	

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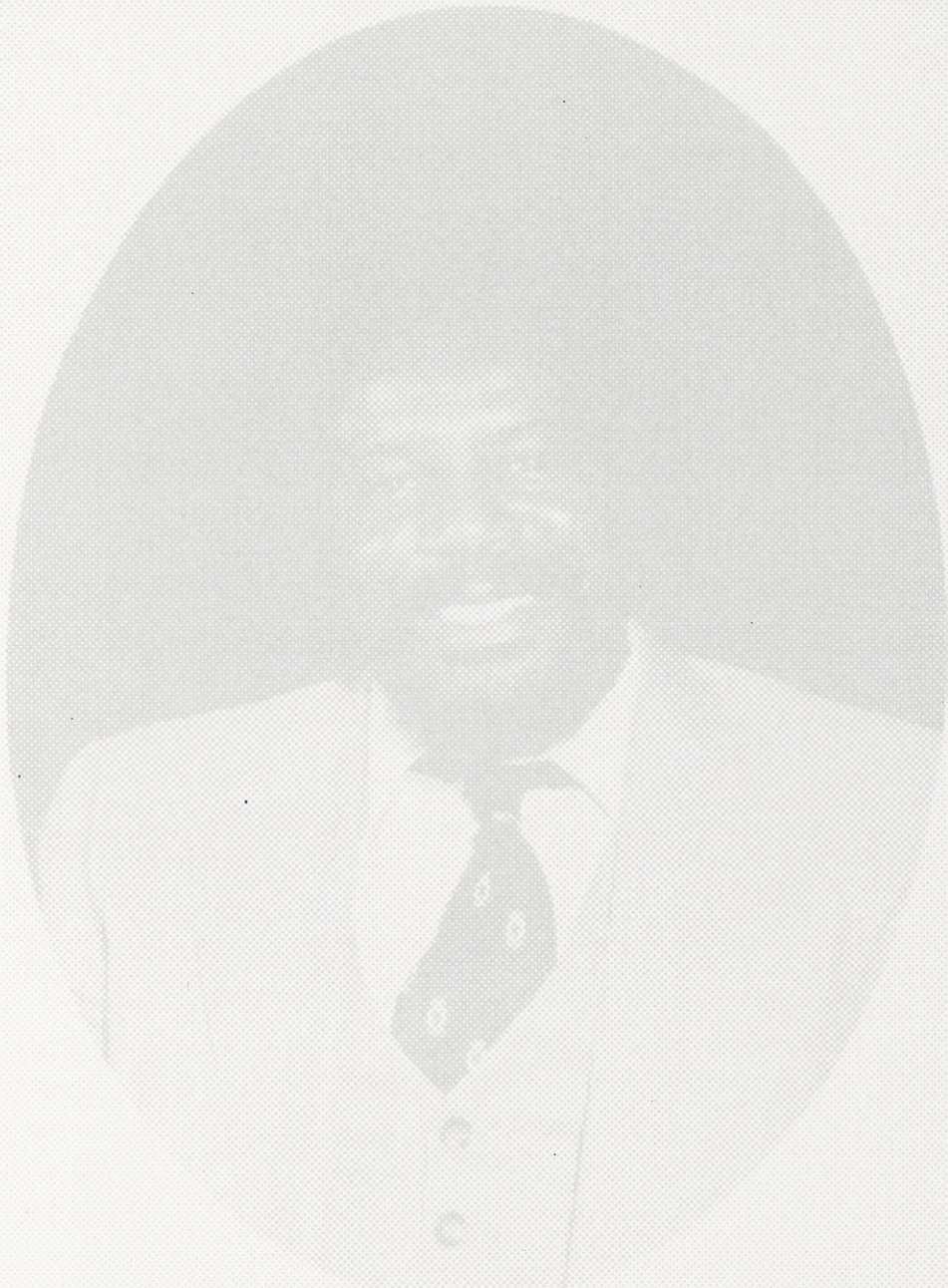

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Family photo of Benjamin Williams, founder of Williams Low-Cost Appliances, now owned by his nephew, at 6451 San Pablo Avenue, 2015

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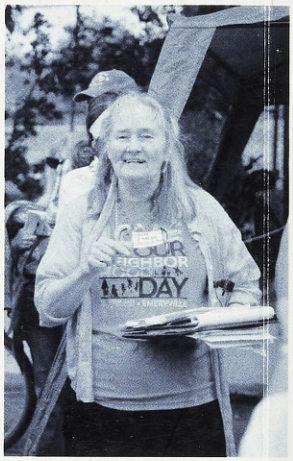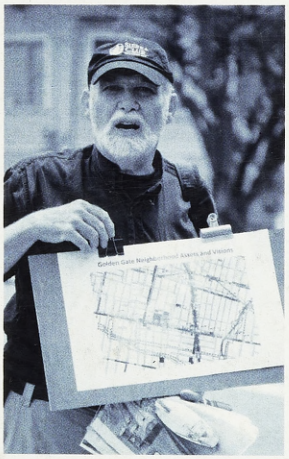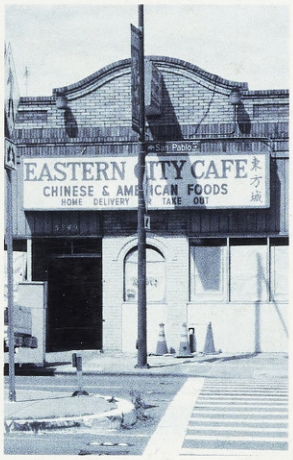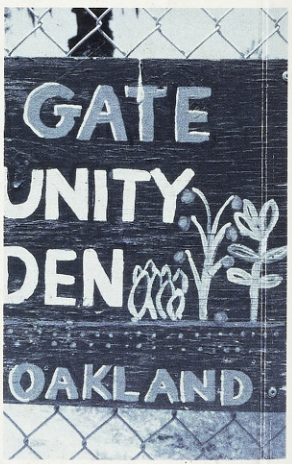
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